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JUNE 1997

skin diver

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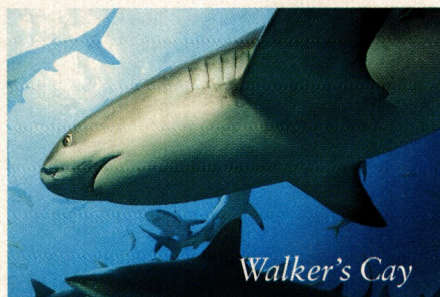
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Surrounded by Stingrays!



Walker's Cay



*Stuart Cove's
Dive South
Ocean*

About the cover: A Southern Stingray glides into the outstretched arms of Kathie Kipp at Grand Cayman's Stingray City while Vicki Murphy looks on. Considered "the world's best 12 foot dive," this site is currently celebrating its tenth anniversary. In the past 10 years, the stingrays here have dazzled more than one million divers and snorkelers. Turn to page 20 for more on Stingray City. Photo/Geri Murphy.

skin diver

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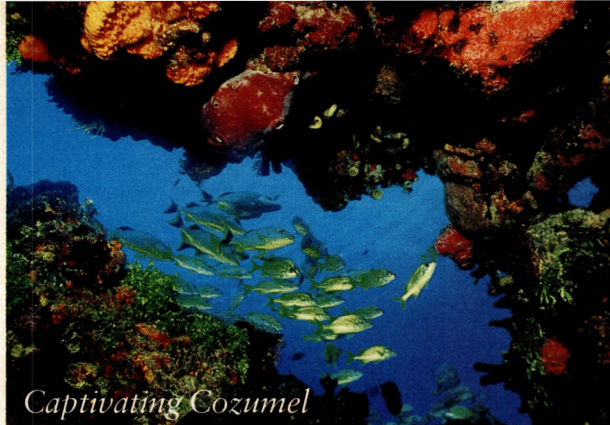
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Magnificent Micronesia



BC Buying Basics



Snorkeling Tourbook's Condo Critters

Citizen Science



One of the best aspects of my job is meeting other divers; sometimes in places as common as Key Largo, Florida and Monterey, California and others as remote as Papua New Guinea's Bismarck Sea. Divers' opinions, on a variety of issues and destinations, help shape future issues of SKIN DIVER and provide the staff with direct reader feedback on the diving world.

Marine conservation comes up frequently in those conversations. I find nearly all divers feel passionately about the ongoing degradation of the marine environment. And, this passion seems to grow with each dive. The more we learn about the oceans and waterways of the world, the more we realize how badly they suffer from our ecological indifference. Overfishing, pollution and degradation of basic water quality all impact the oceans negatively but these issues are often so huge, pervasive and complex the solutions seem almost more than we can handle.

What's a diver to do? Well, the first step (which most of us have taken) is admitting to the seriousness of the problems. Second, we should learn as much about the problems as we can. Third, we need to realize we are not alone; there are literally millions of people who feel the same way! After this, direct action is the next logical step. Hence the term, Citizen Science, was coined. This is simply regular folks getting involved as volunteers in a variety of projects. In addition to their volunteer efforts, the organizations also make contributions to the scientific world—adding to the knowledge currently on hand about the oceans.

Getting involved can take many different forms. You can support local and national organizations that are working to eliminate the sources of water degradation by joining. Writing a check for \$15 to \$25 is often all it takes.

On the next level, direct participation in these organizations is a tremendous way to help solve the problems. Your contribution of time, for many the most valuable gift they have to offer, helps these primarily volunteer organizations accomplish many goals they otherwise would have to forego.

DO BOTH!

It does get a little difficult trying to figure out which organization you might select. In any given month, SKIN DIVER receives up to 20 solicitations from different environmental organizations. I truly wish we had the resources to fund and support each and every one of them. Frankly, we don't. As a matter of fact, we rarely have the time to check out new organizations and projects to determine their benefits to the marine environment. For the average diver, the array of organizations claiming to have the unique solution to marine environmental

problems can be bewildering.

There are two organizations we fully support and have worked with for several years. They have unique criteria to set them apart from the other organizations doing environmental work. Both are also involved with Citizen Science or, in this case, Diver Science. They are REEF and the Center for Marine Conservation. Both organizations use volunteer divers to participate in ongoing projects that help the environment and add knowledge to the scientific world. We feel divers can make huge individual contributions to both organizations doing something they do best: diving.

REEF stands for Reef Environmental Education Foundation, founded in 1991, and consists of divers who count fish populations. The data they collect is used to measure species biodiversity (a key element in measuring the health of any ecosystem) and species abundance (measuring the health of a particular area within an ecosystem).

Now this may sound a little too much like Citizen Science but I'd like to reassure you that's not the case. Any diver or snorkeler can participate in REEF projects. They have an incredible staff that also spends a great deal of time helping divers learn all about fish—from basic identification through to the advanced stuff. And, I can also reassure you that fieldwork with REEF is not a dull, scientific chore. It's diving, it's fun and it helps make a difference!

The Center for Marine Conservation (CMC) is best known in the diving world for its sponsorship of the International U/W Cleanups (the largest event in the diving world) held each September. This year, the organization (along with co-sponsors PADI and SKIN DIVER) are looking for volunteers to become Trash Captains and organize a cleanup (or a mini cleanup) in their area. Last year we set a record, with all 50 states participating. We would like to do even better this year. So, if you've been planning on doing a cleanup but haven't gotten around to it, this is the year for action.

On the surface, cleanups don't seem to fit the bill of Citizen Science. Environmentally cool, yes, but science? Yes! CMC collects the information from cleanups around the world and uses the data to fight marine pollution and debris. They have a great track record of success! They also have mounted major campaigns against overfishing, protection of shark resources (they are a little lonely with this one but it's growing) and basic water quality issues.

Both organizations need our help. I'll close with a gentle push in the direction of Citizen Science. The government, which used to take care of these things, doesn't anymore. Budget cuts, etc., have dropped the funding of marine related projects to an all time low. If citizens don't take up the slack, it's just not going to get done. And that, friends, spells danger for the oceans and waterways around the world! Please give this your most thoughtful consideration. Thanks! 

BILL GLEASON
PUBLISHER & EDITOR

 CITIZEN. HOW THE WORLD TELLS TIME.

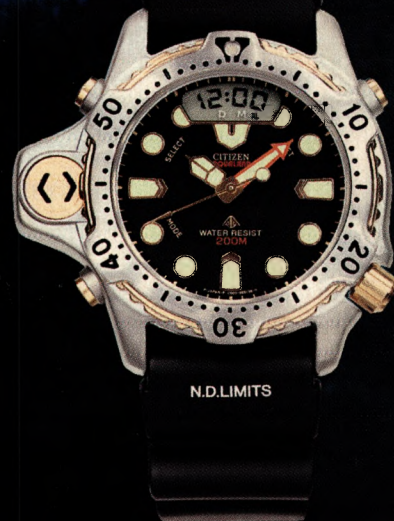
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The Mares Esa

SEE YOUR GAUGES CLEARLY WITH THIS EXCLUSIVE MASK

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL GLEASON

"A mask is a mask is a mask." To most divers, a mask rarely inspires a passionate response. Sure, it has to fit properly but that's getting easier and easier. To some, color is important—but rarely a passionate matter. Indeed, with the current glut of "me, too" masks from a bewildering array of manufacturers, smart consumers might ask, "Is there a mask out there that clearly outperforms the rest?" The answer is "Yes" and the product is the Mares Esa.

The Esa is one of the few six window masks available and carries the first patent on such a mask. The six windows allow a diver a much broader range of vision. You can see forward, to the sides and down. The side windows are pretty much a matter of preference (some divers like them, others just don't care) but the beauty of this unique mask is its bottom windows. Because you can see down as well as forward, your depth gauge, computer, pressure gauge and camera settings are clearly visible without having to twist yourself into a pretzel!

That's a pretty good idea but it's only the beginning of a great one. Four of the Esa lenses (the two front ones and the two bottom ones) can be replaced with corrective lenses—right in the dive store, while you watch. Mares manufactures lenses for the front windows in diopters ranging from -1 to -10, in 0.5 increments. The bottom lenses are available in diopters ranging from +1.5 to +3, also in 0.5 increments. By testing which combination of lenses works for you, you can leave your dive store with the equivalent of a prescription mask for not much more than you'd pay for a regular set of glasses!

About 55 percent of the entire population wears glasses or contacts, yet less than 10 percent of divers wears optically corrected masks. This means there are a lot of folks out there whose underwater vision just isn't as good as it could be! With the advent of the Mares Esa (and other masks that can be optically fit right in the store), there's no reason not to have the best possible U/W vision.

Consider, too, the plight of those who have passed the magical 40 year mark—there's a very high probability that "reading" glasses will be in their immediate fu-



The Mares six window Esa is the only mask that allows the diver to correct his/her vision for close-up viewing (by using the two lower windows) while maintaining a normal field of view through the two main windows.

tures! Divers over 40 will find it harder to read their instruments and gauges (it's almost impossible, according to some). The divers' forward vision is fine with a standard mask but they can't hold their gauges far enough away to be able to read them. You can grin and bear it or buy gauges with larger displays but it's a lot easier to get an optical mask. It's also a lot easier on the wallet (even if you're starting to have trouble telling the \$10 bills from the \$20s without your glasses).

The Mares Esa solves this problem quickly and easily! You can put magnifying lenses in the lower windows of the mask to see your gauges and camera/video controls clearly and leave the standard glass in the front windows. Divers needing to correct both their normal and close-up vision can put new lenses in all four windows.

The Mares Esa will solve about 80 percent of all U/W vision problems, by far the

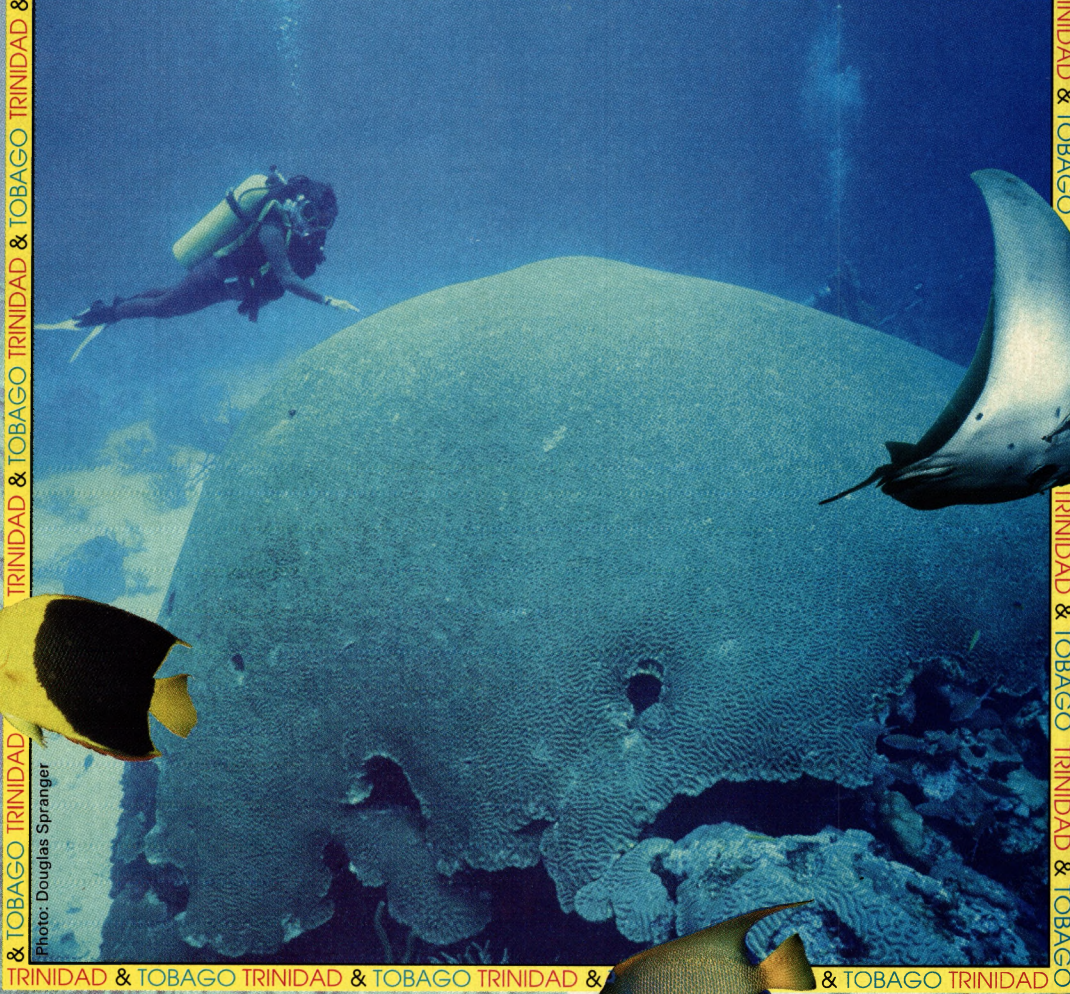


photo/Bonnie J. Cardone

highest percentage of any mask on the market except for custom prescription masks. Folks with special vision requirements may have to go the custom route but most of us can enjoy our diving with Esa's diopter lenses. Look for the Mares: Just Add Water eye chart in your local dive store and take a look at the Esa. Whether you need fully corrected vision or just underwater reading glasses, this system will help you clearly see all the good stuff that's down there, including your gauges.

For the location of the Mares optics dealer closest to you, please contact: Mares America, Shore Pointe, One Selleck Street, Norwalk, CT 06885; (800) 874-3236 or fax (800) 253-8509.

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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL



Sea & Sea's MX-10 with YS-40A strobe and macro lens were used to take this photo of an anemonefish in Fiji (top). The system offers the freedom of point and shoot simplicity while producing quality photos.

The underwater world offers never ending wonders that keep divers returning time after time. Photography offers the best means of capturing your underwater memories but getting started may not seem so easy. You've seen photographers lugging cameras, housings and strobes and heard stories about how many hours of their vacation they spend greasing O-rings.

Sea & Sea Underwater Photography, USA, has a solution for those who want to make the plunge. The MX-10 camera is an entry level system that will produce great results. The quality is so good many professional underwater photographers carry an MX-10 as a backup!

The MX-10 is a compact point and shoot camera. The standard 32mm lens works great topside as well as underwater. Add a macro, close-up or wide angle lens and you are ready to capture any of the underwater marvels. The versatility of additional lenses gives you the freedom to bring it all back on film. Best of all, you can change lenses underwater! You can

photograph a small brittlestar and then switch to the wide angle lens and capture a manta as it passes by. No other system offers such freedom.

The camera has an internal flash but adding the cordless YS-40A strobe will produce better quality photos. An infrared sensor in the base of the flash mates with an identical sensor in the camera. There are no cumbersome cords to get in the way or cause problems. It seems Sea & Sea has thought of everything to make picture taking easy.

The MX-10 is the perfect camera for all your vacations. It is even compact and lightweight enough to fit in your carry-on bag or your BC pocket.

The MX-10 is also the perfect companion when you are enjoying the freedom of snorkeling. Grab your mask, fins and the little yellow camera and discover the special world just feet from the shore. You can put on the close-up lens and make fish say cheese or switch to the macro lens and show the nudibranch its

(Continued on Page 44)

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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

The Grand Turk wall is separated from the superb sandy beach only by a small section of spectacularly clear water. The boat ride between beach and wall takes about the same time as riding an escalator from men's clothing to bedroom furnishings in a large department store. The wall starts at about 40 feet, where mounds of Star and Brain Coral are piled along the lip. From there it drops thousands of feet into the deep chasm that separates Grand Turk from the Caicos Islands. The face of the wall is thick with corals and sponges, interwoven in a tapestry of green, yellow and purple. The deep water along the wall is a highway for large pelagic animals such as rays, sharks and turtles. Visibility of more than 100 feet is normal and the water temperature is usually 80 to 84°F. If that isn't great diving, what is? Maybe some adventure diving off the remote islands of South Caicos and Salt Cay?

BLUE WATER DIVERS: Blue Water Divers is now operating a new 24 foot V-hull boat called *Dancing Fool*, acquired expressly for exploring new areas within about an hour's ride of Grand Turk. On South Caicos the diving is more advanced, with deeper walls and an increased chance of encounters with larger critters such as sharks and Spotted Eagle Rays. Salt Cay provides a full spectrum of diving opportunities, including the possibility of a fascinating dive into the past on the wreck of the *Endymion*. The Salt Cay excursion is also ideal for snorkeling and includes a beach picnic.

Unlike the Grand Turk reef and wall dives, which have year-round excellent conditions in the protected lee of the island, these excursions are dependent on the weather. Late spring through early fall is the best bet, when the trade winds tend to lie down.

One of the things that makes Grand Turk diving great is that the island is so laidback. There are no traffic lights, high rise buildings or fast food restaurants. The airport should have a container marked "Discard Stress Here," because you are going to shed it like an old coat anyway when you meet Mitch Rolling, the owner and operator of Blue Water Divers. You'll be able to recognize him easily, because you'll see his face when you check in, when
(Continued on Page 142)



Background: Face to face with a Nassau Grouper at Coral Gardens. Above: Blue Water owner Mitch Rolling. Right: A wide expanse of sea and sand is steps from the front porch of the Salt Raker Inn.



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To celebrate 25 years of industry leading innovations, Sea Quest recently gave each of 13 lucky divers a complete set of gear, for free! The prize winners came from all over the United States, including such landlocked states as Utah and Nebraska, and there was even one winner from Holland. The winners are all now sporting a new BC, wetsuit, mask, fins, snorkel and gauge (150 foot analog or Favor wrist mount dive computer). They also represent a rather varied cross section of SKIN DIVER readers.

for her profession.

John Henry, an attorney and musician from Boston, Massachusetts, tried out his new gear in the chilly waters off Cape Ann. He particularly enjoyed the freedom of diving with his new weight integrated Quickdraw BC. He is also thrilled with his Sea Quest Favor dive computer.

Kenneth Smith of Bear River, Utah, donned his new Predator BC and wetsuit, Idea 3 fins, Tetra mask, Sidedraft snorkel, Favor computer and headed into the waters of nearby Bear Lake for some freshwater hunting.

Randy Settle from Winter Springs, Florida, is a longtime amateur treasure hunter and sometime skeptic. He truly thought the Sea Quest representative was pulling his leg until all that great gear arrived and, as promised, there was no catch. Like John Henry, Randy especially appreciates leaving his weightbelt at home when using his new weight integrated Quickdraw.

Thirteen Lucky Winners

SEA QUEST'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY SWEEPSTAKES

BY TY SAWYER
PHOTOS BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

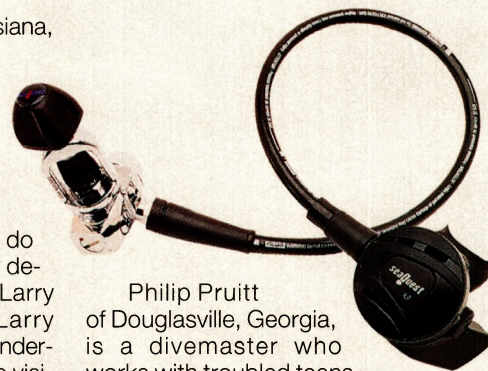


To celebrate its 25th anniversary, Sea Quest gave away 13 complete sets of gear. Above: The Tetra mask, Sidedraft snorkel, Idea 3 fins and Dimension XP BC were among the choices.

Fred Burleigh of Alexandria, Louisiana, was waiting for the oil to be changed in his car when he opened SKIN DIVER, came upon the sweepstakes card, filled it out and won. It is his first complete set of dive equipment—for some people winning is just that easy.

From the files of a diver who will do anything to get wet and probably deserves to win free gear, comes Larry Philbrick of Ord, Nebraska. Larry spends two weeks a year doing underwater bridge inspections, in zero visibility water, for his home state. Larry tried out his new gear in Grand Cayman, where the visibility is substantially better than it is in the rivers back home and the marine life is a noticeable improvement over the 150 pound catfish he frequently encounters while drift diving those same rivers.

Sherrie Secunde of Arlington, Virginia, a terribly busy graduate student completing her Master's in Environmental Biology (with an emphasis on Marine Biochemistry) was incredibly effusive about her new gear, especially the Diva BC. She tried most of her gear while working in St. Croix (the benefits of doing marine environment research). A poor graduate student, she was extremely thankful to win such vital tools



Philip Pruitt of Douglasville, Georgia, is a divemaster who works with troubled teens. Philip was shocked when he won, ripping open his box of new Sea Quest gear like a kid when it arrived and, true diver that he is, was deep in a quarry in Alabama two days later, putting it all to the test. The best part for Philip was he could finally do some computer diving with his new Favor.

I tried to speak to Robert Abegg of Martinez, California, but he and his wife are traipsing around South America for a month. I did find out (from his house sitter) that his new Favor is his first dive computer and he was understandably excited about using it and all his new Sea Quest gear.

Grant Madison, of Shoreview, Minnesota, picked up SKIN DIVER in an airport shop on his way home from Hawaii. He hopes to use the gear soon, preferably in the warmer waters south of Minnesota

since he chose Sea Quest's 3/2 Neothins wetsuit as part of his set.

Jennifer Maldonado, of Augusta, Georgia, is now very well stocked with top of the line dive equipment. She loves snorkeling in her new 3/5/3 jumpsuit, Tetra mask and Reflex fins.

Rounding out the winner's list is Nico Van Oosten of Barendrecht, The Netherlands; Ashley Nicole Caliri of Montebello, California; and Suzanne Heffner of Clarksburg, California, all of whom were incommunicado, in spite of our efforts to contact them.

All the winners I spoke with were impressed with the high quality of the Sea Quest products they received and expect to enjoy their gear for many years. Each chose products for a wide variety of diving preferences and no one had to settle for an alternate piece of equipment. The Quickdraw BC, Diva BC, Sidedraft snorkel and Favor dive computer drew the most raves for their simplicity of use and intelligent design. The style and fit of the wetsuits also brought many favorable comments.

Congratulations to these 13 lucky Sea Quest prize winners! 🐠

Dive Notes

AGGRESSOR FLEET GOES INTERACTIVE:

What's the diving like in Belize? How many staterooms does the *Palau Aggressor II* have? The new Passport to the Aggressor Fleet, on CD-ROM, provides divers, travel agents and dive shops with full information, photographs, diagrams and video of the entire Aggressor Fleet. With 10 live-aboard destinations on the map, Aggressor Fleet asked Sea-D Publishing of Grand Cayman to develop an interactive marketing tool for its sales team. Sea-D produced a complete multimedia promotional package, including the CD-ROM and a Web site.

The CD-ROM allows divers to compare and watch videos for each destination, read about marine life, look at itineraries, study weather patterns and ultimately plan a great trip. Likewise, the Aggressor Fleet Web site features detailed information and photos on each destination, updates on specials, winners of the recent annual photo competition and provides a direct e-mail link to Aggressor Fleet for reservations and additional information.

To receive a copy of the Passport to the Aggressor Fleet CD-ROM, call (800) 348-2628, e-mail divboat@aol.com or 103261.1275@compuserve.com or visit the Aggressor Fleet Web site at <http://www.aggressor.com>. 🐠

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photo/Bill Harrigan

Sand Dollar Condominium Resort

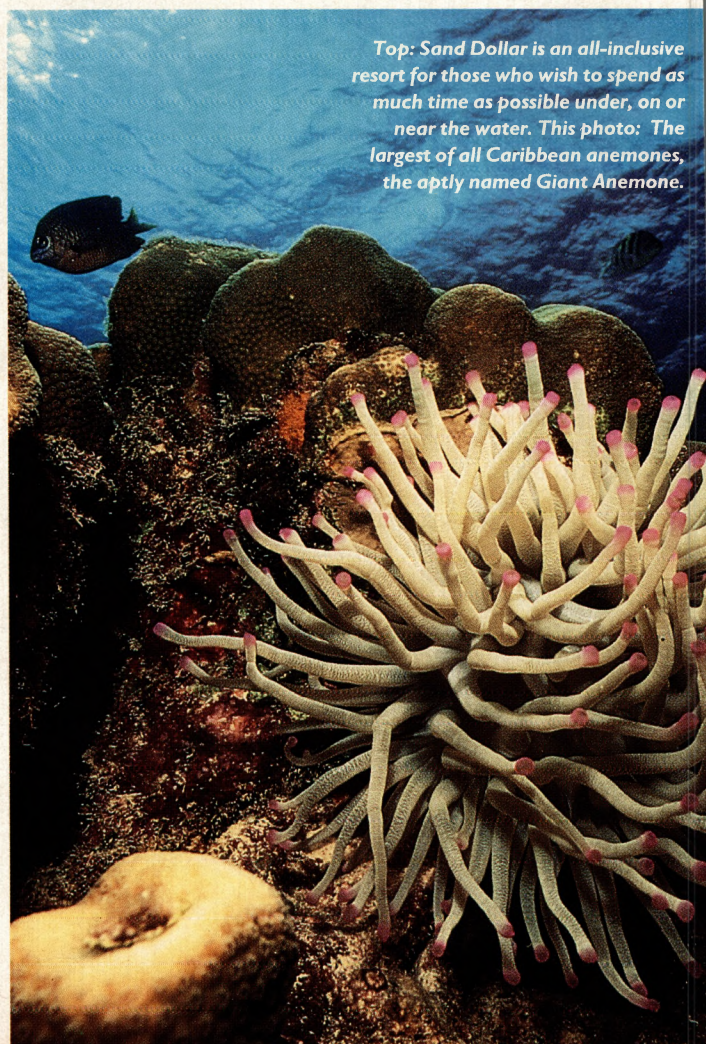
MANY AMENITIES AND
GREAT ACTIVITIES ON BONAIRE

BY SUSAN L. SWYGERT

Choosing a vacation destination isn't easy—your wish list probably reads: great diving, great dive shop, great weather and water, accommodations and food. Those of us who love the ocean want to spend as much time as possible near the water, on the water and especially underwater! We want our vacation experience to be fun and hassle-free, a perfect timeout from the typical ups and downs of daily life.

The Caribbean region can fulfill many of the vacationing diver's needs, particularly Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, just north of Caracas, Venezuela. Known as one of the top diving destinations in the world, it has many unique characteristics that blend to earn it this reputation. Visitors find Bonaire to be extraordinarily special.

Only a few degrees above the equator, Bonaire is beneath the hurricane belt and cooled year-round by steady trade winds. Lying north to south, the island boasts 265 miles of leeward coast, dotted with more than 75 spectacular dive sites
(Continued on Page 139)



Top: Sand Dollar is an all-inclusive resort for those who wish to spend as much time as possible under, on or near the water. This photo: The largest of all Caribbean anemones, the aptly named Giant Anemone.

skin diver

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TEN YEARS AGO

SKIN DIVER published the first magazine cover and feature story about Grand Cayman's Stingray City in September 1987.

Author/photographer Geri Murphy gave the site its name, beginning her article with that world famous Bob Hollis quote, "This is the world's best 12 foot dive."

During the last ten years, Stingray City has been featured in more than 1,000 magazine and newspaper articles, as well as numerous television shows and several films. Stingray City is a household word for divers around the world.

Owing to this immense press coverage and public popularity, Grand Cayman water-sport operators have introduced these incredibly friendly stingrays to more than one million scuba divers, snorkelers and non-diving visitors.

This summer, the Cayman Islands are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Stingray City as the world's most unusual scuba and snorkeling dive site. Meanwhile, the population of stingrays at Stingray City, Sandbar and other nearby sites has grown, now numbering an estimated 150 rays.

Surrounded By Stingrays— What Would You Do? *Celebrate!*

IT'S THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEST 12 FOOT DIVE IN THE WORLD

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALT STEARNS

Propelled by the graceful undulations of their broad, wing-like pectoral fins, they glide through the water, inches above the rippled sand bottom. The large rays coming toward us were on a mission—our handouts of chopped squid were the booty.

In their quest, they will go from diver to diver, swirling vigorously around, under and over, until the food is discovered. Then they hov-

er and circle like a squadron of giant bats, quickly inhaling the surrendered morsels with ravenous gusto.

The stars of the show at **Stingray City** are Southern Stingrays (*Dasyatis americana*). The males are smaller on average, with a wingspan of two feet, while the females can exceed five feet.

The Cayman Islands offer some of the most distinctive and exalted diving in the Caribbean but it is the interactions with these friendly members of the shark clan that have become the region's signature.

(Continued on Page 78)



Southern Stingrays (*Dasyatis americana*) and a diver at Stingray City off Grand Cayman.

AquaShot PHOTO CONTEST

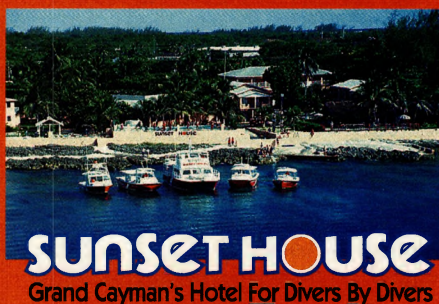
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Finalists

All finalists will receive an assortment of Ikelite products, t-shirts and have their photographs displayed on the Ikelite web site @ www.ikelite.com

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You know how easy the single-use cameras are to use and the excellent results they provide above water. Now you can get the same simplicity of operation and excellent results underwater. Start with the Ikelite AquaSnap, a 35mm single-use 27 exposure camera and place it in an AquaShot II housing. The results are amazing. Sharp, colorful photographs rivaling those taken by expensive underwater camera systems. Operates to 125 feet (38m).

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Water Correcting Lens allows close focus for sharper more colorful photographs.

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AquaSnap Camera

No need to worry where to buy cameras for the AquaShot II housing. Ikelite now offers a disposable camera for use above water or in the housing. The AquaSnap camera features built-in flash and 27-exposure film. Available at your local dive shop.



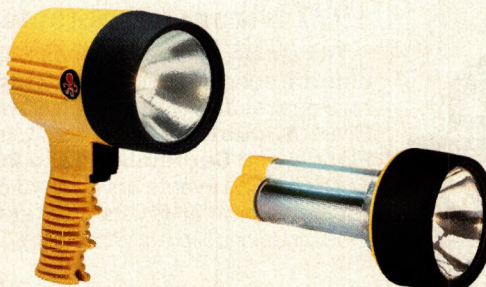
Official Entry Forms available at your local Ikelite Dealer or on the Ikelite web site @ www.ikelite.com

Deadline

AquaShot entries must be postmarked no later than November 30, 1997



See Ikelite's full line of Dive Lights at your local dive shop.



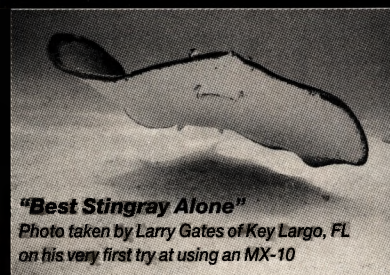
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July - October 1997

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Photo taken by Larry Gates of Key Largo, FL on his very first try at using an MX-10

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DIVER'S CALENDAR

Dive Tampa

Dive Tampa, Florida's premier scuba, travel and watersports show, will be held **May 30 to June 1** at the Tampa Convention Center. Admission is \$5; the first 500 will be admitted free each day.

For information, contact Dive Tampa at (800) 636-2763. 🐠

Seaspace '97

Dr. Sylvia Earle, Dr. Graham Hawkes and Jim Church will headline Seaspace '97 **May 30 to June 1** at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Houston, Texas. There will be seminars, workshops, an U/W film festival, photo competition, environmental awareness exhibits and more.

For information, tickets or photo contest entry form, call (713) 467-6675. 🐠

U/W Treasure Hunt

Rick's Dive 'N Travel will sponsor its 19th Annual U/W Treasure Hunt **June 8** at Lake Ouachita in Hot Springs, Arkansas. More than \$6,000 in prizes will be given away. The entry fee is \$30 and includes a T-shirt and cookout.

For information, call Rick's at (501) 753-6004; fax (501) 753-5150. 🐠

Clean Oceans '97

Save Our Seas (SOS) will sponsor the second annual Clean Oceans conference **June 13 to 15** at the Princeville Hotel, Kauai, Hawaii. This year's conference will focus on the preservation of coral reefs. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will be the keynote speaker. The conference will feature lectures, movies and leisure activities. The cost is \$195 to \$250.

For information, call SOS at (808) 826-2525; fax (808) 826-7770 or e-mail sos@aloha.net. 🐠

Scuba '97

The Scuba '97 dive show will take place **June 20 to 22** on board the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, California. The event will feature 50,000 square feet of diving related exhibits, U/W films, seminars, exhibitor presentations, door prizes and a Casino Party. Admission is \$8. For information call (310) 792-2333. 🐠

1997 Nikonos Shootouts

The always popular Nikonos Shootouts are scheduled for **June 21 to 28** on Bonaire; **July 12 to 19** on Cayman Brac; **August 8 to 17** in Key Largo, Florida; and **September 13 to 20** on Curacao. The events are open to photographers of all levels and feature thousands of dollars in prizes.

For information, call WaterHouse Photo Tours at (800) 272-9122; fax (305) 452-2228 or e-mail to phototours@aol.com. 🐠

Great American Fish Count and Training Seminars

The Great American Fish Count will take place **July 1 through 13**. Several pre-count training seminars will be given in the following communities: In West Palm Beach, FL **June 19 to 20**; in Key Largo, FL **June 30**; in Marathon, FL **July 3**; and in Key West, FL **July 7**. Seminars will be also held in Houston, TX **June 14, 20 and 21**; in San Francisco, CA **June 8**; at the Monterey Bay (CA) Aquarium **June 14**; and in Santa Barbara, CA **June 18**. The cost of training is nominal and includes fish ID and survey methods, survey materials and a GAFC T-shirt.

For information on the West Coast region, call the Marine Conservation Network at (510) 838-2544. For the South Atlantic and Gulf Coast regions, call Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) at (305) 451-0312. 🐠

Titanic Exhibit in Memphis

The Memphis Pyramid will exhibit more than 300 artifacts recovered from the wreck of the *Titanic* through **September 30**.

For information, please call (800) 2-MEMPHIS. 🐠

Cayman Madness 1997

Bob Soto's Diving, Ltd. and Caribbean Dive Tours have teamed up again to offer divers another chance to experience a value packed "dive and party package" at '70s prices **September 11 through October 23**. Cayman Madness '97 is an eight day/seven night (Thursday through Thursday) dive vacation package that features a full program of activities, social events and chances to win hundreds of prizes. In addition to airfare and accommodations, the package price includes six days of diving, a dance, rum punch/steel band party, BBQ, U/W treasure hunt and cookout, free equipment test dives, free use of Nikonos V cameras and strobes and more. The event is limited to 150 divers per week.

For more information, call Caribbean Dive Tours at (800) 786-3483 or fax (770) 565-0129. 🐠

If you have a diving related event you would like to see included in our Calendar section, please send information via e-mail to:

sawyert@petersenpub.com

or fax (213) 782-2121

HELPFUL HINTS

BC Buying Basics

HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE THE DIVER'S BEST FRIEND: A BUOYANCY COMPENSATOR

BY JIM WALKER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

When Scubapro introduced its Stabilizing Jacket many years ago, it altered the course of buoyancy compensator development forever. Seemingly overnight, the BC became a necessary and integral item of function and comfort. Scubapro continues to be a leader in this field, constantly refining the Stabilizing Jacket and introducing a number of other cutting edge BC designs. The three models discussed here are just a representative sample of the excellent Scubapro BC line. All feature advanced single bag construction.

CLASSIC EXPEDITION

The Classic Expedition's design makes it perfect for the diver desiring the ultimate in stability. Its high lift capacity (72 pounds) will suit those who carry lots of gear underwater. Made of 420 denier nylon pack cloth, with a double neoprene coating, it is as rugged as it is stable. The seams of the air chamber are sealed by hand, including contact bonding, double nylon stitching and seam tape inside and out. This Finseal construction is rated to last twice as long as standard seam seals, even under the heaviest of workloads.

The Expedition has an integrated weight system for reduced drag and increased comfort and stability underwater. A large weight pocket is positioned on either side, behind the huge, mesh-drained accessory pockets. A removable weight insert module, which slips into the weight pocket, keeps the weights (up to two 5.5 pound Scubapro Eco-Weights) manageable. The modules can be removed and handed up to a crew member for easy boat boarding. Ditching the weight pockets is easy. Merely pull the convenient handles and the touch-fastener closing weight pockets fall open. Optional weight pockets can be positioned on the scuba tank band as well.

INTEGRATED WEIGHT?

Both the Classic Expedition and Falcon BCs feature integrated weight systems. Many divers prefer this type of weighting to reduce drag underwater and for better balance and stability. It also helps prevent the inflated BC from riding up underwater. Since such weight integration removes much or all of the weight worn on the weight-belt, it can ease back strain, too.

On both the Expedition and Falcon, two special pockets are provided that will hold up to 11 pounds of Eco-Weights each, for a total of 22 pounds maximum. Ditching weight is easy. These pockets have touch-fastener closing bottoms that can be instantly opened by pulling convenient handles. For even more stability, optional weight pockets can be positioned on the scuba tank band as well.

Scubapro offers Eco-Weights in 5.5 pound (\$17.20), 3.7 pound (\$11.60) and 2.2 pound (\$6.90) sizes. These are composed of lead shot in a sealed bag made of heavy plastic, so you never have to worry about comfort or corrosion.

As with all Scubapro BCs, you have the choice of purchasing a Quick-Release Power Inflator or AIR 2 Alternate Inflation Regulator. BC deflation is accomplished in four ways: manually, by holding the inflator hose above the head or by activating one of the three dump valves—at the inflator hose/shoulder junction, on the right shoulder and on the back at the bottom right.

The Expedition has a hard pack with a secure nylon webbing tank band and stainless cam action buckle. The pack houses a retractable carrying handle and is cushioned by a Thermoform backpad, which gives maximum comfort without increasing buoyancy. A similarly padded cummerbund closes with a touch-fastener strip and secures the front of the jacket in combination with a double adjustable, quick-release waist strap. Owing to the jacket design, the Expedition's shoulders are not adjustable but the upper front of the BC se-



BC TIPS

- Test dive prospective BC styles before you buy and, when you do buy, be sure you have the right size for your body and type of diving.
- Set up your weight/suit/BC system for proper flotation before diving. This is best done in a pool or other controlled situation.
- Be sure your BC is properly adjusted before your dive trip. This includes backpack height, tank band threading and tightening and shoulder/waist straps/cummerbund adjusted for a comfortable fit with buckles correctly positioned.
- Fine tune the BC adjustments with your dive suit on, just before entering the water. This should be done after weights are added to weight integrated BCs.
- Adjust the height of your scuba tank in the backpack before entering the water and be sure all hoses and straps are properly located. Test your power inflator or AIR 2 and put just enough air into the BC to keep you afloat.
- Underwater, fill and empty your BC in small increments, checking for effect each time.

KEY FEATURES

CLASSIC EXPEDITION

- Stabilizing Jacket design
- Integrated weight system
- 420 denier nylon pack cloth, double neoprene coated
- Three dump valves
- Softpack cummerbund and Thermoform backpad
- Universal Attachment System
- Sizes/pounds lift: XS/37, S/43, M/54, L/67, XL/85
- Colors: Black, with black or olive accents

This is Scubapro's top of the line BC. The jacket design makes it perfect for the diver desiring the ultimate in stability and flotation.

Suggested retail price.....\$585
Add \$80 for Quick-Release Power Inflator or \$214 for AIR 2 Alternate Inflation Regulator



cures with an adjustable, quick-release buckle and elastic strap.

The Classic Expedition has a whistle and two plastic D-rings for attaching gear, plus a small, zipper accessed pocket on the flap of each primary pocket. However, the star accessory feature is the Universal Attachment System. This features a slotted plastic panel on the left pocket. Plastic tabs are locked into the proper slots to accommodate a variety of accessories, such as a knife, with corresponding mating devices.

FALCON

The Falcon is a back flotation BC. The air chamber is completely behind the diver, encircling the scuba tank. This leaves the diver's chest area open for total freedom of movement and helps stabilize the tank underwater. This design is perfect for underwater photographers and dry-suit divers.

Made of 420 denier nylon pack cloth, with a polyurethane coating, the air chambers have heat sealed seams. This combination is nearly as durable as that on the Expedition. The air cell attaches via a plastic zipper, so it can be replaced.

The Falcon has the same weight integration system as the Expedition. It also uses a similar backpack (with retractable

carrying handle) and tank band/buckle. It offers a choice of inflator but has only two dump valves, one on the shoulder and one on the lower back. There are two accessory pockets on each side as well as

SELECTING YOUR STYLE OF BC

Many features must be considered when selecting a buoyancy compensator but one of the most important is the overall design of the flotation chambers. There are three main styles. Each has its own particular benefits, depending on personal preferences and the type of diving you do.

Stabilizing Jacket (Classic Expedition): This design provides unrestricted movement of air through chambers that wrap around the diver's torso; front, back, sides and over the shoulders. This allows the air inside to remain at the highest point of the BC, relative to the diver, at all times. No matter how the diver twists and turns, dips and ascends, he/she is effectively suspended below this air "bubble," which increases stability underwater tremendously. It also positions the diver in a comfortable, face-up orientation when floating at the surface. All this stability is combined with comparatively more flotation than other BCs, which makes the stabilizing jacket the choice of many divers who carry a lot of gear underwater.

Back flotation (Falcon): Many divers, particularly underwater photographers and drysuit users, prefer a BC that keeps all air chambers completely out of the way, behind the back. Since the air chambers on these back flotation models inflate around the scuba tank, they also provide tank stabilization. The uncluttered harness on this type of BC offers tremendous freedom of movement and total adjustability. Set up like a backpacker's harness, with the quick-release shoulder straps curving back under the arms, it won't ride up, either. These back flotation units also provide excellent support during long surface swims.

Optional pockets (one on each side) for counterweights can be added to the tank band to assist with face up flotation.

Front adjustable (Accent): This type of BC offers a number of adjustments (shoulder straps, waist strap, cummerbund) that allow the fit to be quickly customized above or underwater. This results in perfect comfort at all times, regardless of the thickness of the dive suit worn. This kind of BC is particularly beneficial to those who travel to areas with varying water temperatures. The adjustments are all easily accessible in the chest/waist area, which is open and uncluttered because the air chambers are positioned above the hips and behind the back. The shoulders also feature quick-release buckles so you can get in or out of the BC with ease. The front adjustable design positions the diver face-up at the surface.

POWER INFLATOR OR AIR 2?

With each Scubapro BC you have the choice of purchasing a Quick-Release Power Inflator or Air 2 Alternate Inflation Regulator.

Quick-Release Power Inflator (\$80): If you want compact size and simplicity of use, this inflator might be your choice. It offers precision power inflation regardless of scuba tank pressure. Its ergo-dynamic styling includes large soft-touch buttons for power or manual inflation. These buttons have completely different shapes, sizes and feel for quick identification. The offset mouthpiece seals comfortably against the outside of the lips and it also has a special clearing port to purge water.

AIR 2 Alternate Inflation Regulator (\$214): For the diver desiring the ultimate in streamlining and simplicity, the AIR 2 combines



the power inflator and octopus second stage in one handy, compact, lightweight device. This not only removes the need for a separate octopus, it positions the backup regulator in a much more convenient location. This increases safety in two ways. First, you always know where to find your backup in an emergency. Second, the backup will always stay up off the ocean bottom, reducing the chance of it picking up sediment. (Each time you dump air from your BC, the AIR 2 is flushed clean of any contaminants, too.)

The AIR 2 has a dependable downstream demand valve that will provide plenty of air, even if you use the power inflator while you're breathing from it. The buttons for deflation (or oral inflation) and power inflation have completely different shapes for easy identification.

four stainless steel D-rings and a whistle.

The Falcon's backpack-style harness includes adjustable, quick-release shoulders, backpad and touch-fastener closing cummerbund, double adjustable, quick-release waistband and a similar (though smaller) quick-release front closure on the chest.

ACCENT

The Accent's front adjustable design offers a number of means to quickly customize fit in any situation. This and other features make it an excellent choice for the traveling diver or one who dives in a variety of water temperatures.

The Accent is made of 420 denier nylon, coated with polyurethane. The seams of the air chambers are heat sealed, as in the Falcon. Again, you have the choice of inflators and, as with the Falcon, there are two dump valves.

The Accent does not have a weight integration system. The tank attachment has the same band/buckle as the other BCs but there is no hard pack, only a lumbar support. There's an additional nylon webbing top strap for tank stability and a built-in nylon webbing carrying handle. This flexible, low profile design facilitates packing the Accent into a reduced space for travel.

The Accent's harness has padded shoulders with adjustable, quick-release buckles.

KEY FEATURES

ACCENT

- Front adjustable design
- 420 denier nylon, polyurethane coated
- Air chambers have heat seal seam construction
- Two dump valves
- Padded shoulders, backpad and cummerbund
- Sizes/pounds lift: XS/21, S/27, M/33, L/40, XL/53
- Colors: Black, with accents of dark blue, light blue/lime, yellow/purple or pink/purple

This BC's front adjustable design will suit the traveling or recreational diver needing maximum comfort and infinite variations of fit.

Suggested retail price\$298
Add \$80 for Quick-Release Power Inflator or \$214 for AIR 2 Alternate Inflation Regulator



KEY FEATURES

FALCON

- Back flotation design
- Integrated weight system
- 420 denier nylon pack cloth, polyurethane coated
- Air chambers have heat seal seam construction
- Two dump valves
- Padded, backpack-style shoulder harness and cummerbund
- Sizes/pounds lift: XS/32, S/32, M/40, L/40, XL/40

- Colors: Black, with blue or neon yellow trim

This back flotation BC will satisfy underwater photographers and other divers who desire total freedom of movement and secure comfort.

Suggested retail price\$490
Add \$80 for Quick-Release Power Inflator or \$214 for AIR 2 Alternate Inflation Regulator



SEAHAWK—BEYOND THE FALCON

For technical level divers, the Falcon has a big brother. Including all the same features as the Falcon, the SeaHawk also offers interchangeable air cells with 32, 48 or an incredible 72 pounds of flotation! It is made of 420/840 denier polyurethane coated pack cloth. It has six large, stainless steel D-rings and can be set up easily for twin tanks. It has a suggested retail price of \$572, plus the power inflator or AIR 2.

There is a cushy backpad and a soft, touch-fastener closing cummerbund. Completing the system is a double adjustable, quick-release waist strap. There are two large, mesh-draining front pockets, two plastic D-rings and a whistle.

CONCLUSION

From technical diver to traveler, whatever your needs in a buoyancy compensator, Scubapro has a model that should suit you perfectly. With choices in sizes, buoyancy, inflators and colors, the customization factor is impressive. You can rest assured of durability from the start and all Scubapro BCs are backed by a two year limited warranty.

To make your selection, try on the various BC models at your Scubapro dealer. For information or the address of the dealer nearest you, contact Scubapro USA, 1326 Willow Road, Sturtevant, WI 53177; (888) 801-8382 or (905) 634-0023 in Canada. For information and visuals, check out the Web site at <http://www.jwa.com>.

All-out Diving off Belize's Ambergris Caye

Ramon's Village Is a Tranquil Oasis After a Day of Diving

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY RICK FREHSEE

The boat hovers over a white sand bottom just inside the reefline. Before anyone can get in the water, the black, diamond shapes of stingrays and the sinewy motion of sharks become apparent below. Snorkelers and scuba divers prepare to enter the water, moving almost in slow motion. Although we have been thoroughly briefed on procedures, no one is too sure of what to expect. In an attempt to crack the tension, one of the divers hums the theme from *Jaws*.

You spend most of your life with mother, mentors and media telling you sharks are dangerous and will eat you. Then one day you take a scuba course and learn you can swim with them. And now, here you are in the Caribbean, watching sharks, accompanied by stingrays swimming circles around you! You just can't change gears that fast; a little voice inside tells you they will attack. You search the bottom for a rock big enough to hide under.

But seeing is believing. Five minutes of watching sharks and stingrays behaving like puppy dogs, bumping into you and feeding from the hands of a divemaster, has you convinced. You are the king of the reef and master of the oceans once again. Granted, these are *only* Nurse Sharks, flat-headed bottom dwellers known to the initiated as fairly docile critters. And, the biggest ones are *only* five or six feet long. But they are still sharks and you have swum with them, danced with them and held one on your lap. Suddenly one does become a little aggressive, snapping up a morsel of bait in front of your facemask with the speed of a bullet! The pendulum swings the other way; perhaps you are not the king of the reef, much less master of the oceans.

One-half hour later and you have it pretty well in perspective. You can swim with sharks, even play with them. That is, sharks trained and monitored by experts and under the right conditions. Without this kind of planned spectacle, you would hardly ever see a shark, let alone have a detailed encounter.

Shark-Ray Alley, as this particular site is called, is only one of many Belize diving adventures available aboard the *Miss Gina*, the beautiful and practical 42 foot flagship dive boat of lovely Ramon's Village on Ambergris Caye. Ramon's also has one-half dozen 24 to 26 foot custom dive boats. If you opt for everything available during a typical week's stay, in addition to sharks and rays, you will see an array of undersea attractions. Earlier in the week, we visited many sites along the 20 mile section of the famed Belize Barrier Reef that parallels long, narrow Ambergris Caye.

There are shallow reef gardens punctuated with seaweeds and schools of fishes in the **Hol Chan Marine Sanctuary**, just 15 minutes south of the resort dock. Other sites, mostly 5 to 20 minutes to the north, are deep reef formations along the barrier reef wall. The deep sites are a maze of heavy corals pierced by caverns, fissures and swim-throughs leading

(Continued on Page 130)



Ramon's is a village of sun, sand and thatch-roofed bungalows, with a pool (above), dock and full service dive shop (left).



Shark-Ray Alley is always a favorite destination for divers desiring interactive marine life encounters.



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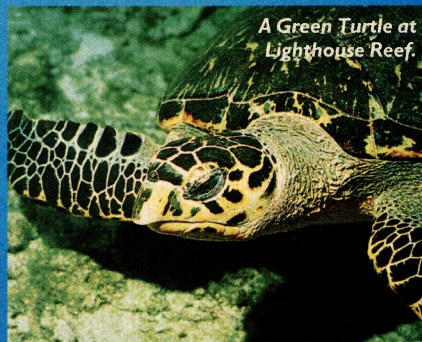


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Belize Aggressor III

DIVING IN THE CLOSE,
COMFORTABLE CARIBBEAN

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY AL HORNSBY



You awaken to a quiet morning with the sea glassy flat and the sun just peeking over the horizon, washing everything in pale rose and lemon. It feels a million miles from civilization; the only sounds are the gentle lapping of water on the ship's hull and the cries of the boobies and frigates nesting on nearby Half Moon Caye.

Beneath the boat, just off the swimstep, is a sheer wall, part of the world's second largest barrier reef. It is encrusted with huge sponges and gorgonians and swarming with reef tropicals and schooling Horse-eye Jacks.

Your memory is still full from last night's dive at **Tarpon Caves**. Here, at the edge of the wall in just 45 feet of water, huge, silvery Tarpon slashed in and out of schools of baitfish gathered around the ship's underwater lights—the entire scene illuminated like some eerie, science fiction movie set.

That's enough to break your reverie and propel you out of bed for another incredible day of diving from the *Belize Aggressor III*.

This new *Aggressor*, less than a year old, is nothing less than a floating luxury hotel that has as its playground the pristine, untouched reefs off the coast of Belize.



photo: Wayne Hasson

In Central America, south of Mexico and east of Guatemala, Belize is a lush, jungled land blessed by Mother Nature with a wonderful richness of vegetation and wildlife. The coastal flatlands are lined with mangrove estuaries, the breeding places for the reef's amazing diversity of marine life.

The interior rises to form 3,000 foot mountains, covered with rain forests that are home to jaguars, ocelots, tapirs and majestic birds of incredible variety. The land is also a seat of ancient history—massive Maya ruins still stand, solemn relics of a civilization trampled but not forgotten by the march of time.

For all its remote, unspoiled nature, Belize is surprisingly accessible and easy to visit. Only a few hours' direct flight from either Miami or Houston, its status as a British colony and its close ties with North America have resulted in an English-speaking culture that accepts U.S. dollars as readily as it does its own. Its restaurants and hotels of-

(Continued on Page 74)



Inset above: The 110 foot long Belize Aggressor III. Background: Large tube sponges are a Belize trademark.

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Thanks to an optimum selection of features, the FAVOR dive computer with complete decompression capabilities enjoys greater universal appeal than any other dive computer in its category. Known also for its ease of operation, the FAVOR features a built-in calendar clock function that displays time even when the computer is switched off and a phosphorescent display that is activated by an independent light source.

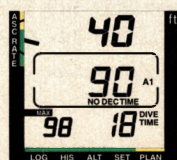
In addition to providing basic dive information, the most advanced and comprehensive logbook memory on the market displays calendar entry time for each dive, average depth and temperature at maximum depth. The history memory records 999 dive events up to 999 dive hours as well as the maximum depth ever reached.

The FAVOR's systematic, easy-to-read graphics are complemented by a pointer-type, four-step ascent rate meter.

For divers who do not require the PC-Interface or simulation features of Suunto's top-of-the-line Eon Lux and Solution Alpha dive computers, the new FAVOR is the ideal choice.



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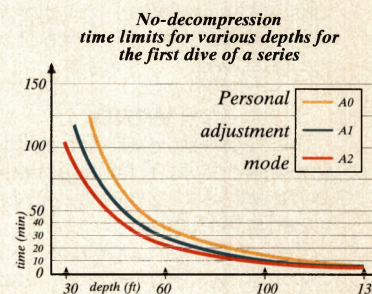
The pearl of dive computers

PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT

Choosing your own safety level

Currently available dive computers operate according to the same principle. They estimate in real time the quantity of nitrogen absorbed by the diver. Most allow only one possibility for any given dive. Suunto is the only manufacturer to offer three alternatives in all its computers, from the simplest (Companion) to the most sophisticated (Eon Lux). Factors that may affect susceptibility to decompression sickness, such as sensitivity to thermal stress, degree of fitness and fatty tissue volume, vary between divers and for the same diver from one day to another. No computer can determine the significance of these individual factors. Only the diver can.

Featuring a three-step personal adjustment mode (A0, A1 and A2), Suunto dive computers allow the



diver to choose gradually more conservative parameters if personal physiological factors and/or dive conditions are such that the risk of decompression sickness is increased. However sophisticated, a dive computer can never replace proper training and a responsible attitude. By allowing you to choose your own safety margins you can control the dive parameters.



Reading the Water

BY E. R. CROSS

The study of the seas, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water is the science of hydrography. It is not necessary for divers to be hydrographers. However, for maximum safety and the greatest enjoyment, a good working knowledge about some aspects of the diving environment is helpful. With a combination of knowledge, experience and observation, enough can be learned of the secrets of areas so that diving is not only safe and enjoyable but rewarding. I call getting this information "reading the water." Whether it is an ocean, a lake or a river, reading the water is a skill that will improve the safety of a dive. Water conditions should never exceed the experience of the least qualified diver.

WIND

This Technifacts will discuss the effect wind has on water. Other conditions involved with reading dive waters will be reviewed in the future.

Physically, both air and water are fluids. Both flow relatively easily and are almost constantly in motion. Surface waves, surge and currents are forms of water in motion. These conditions are variable owing to external forces. Wind is air in motion. It has characteristics comparable to water in motion. The direction and force of the wind are similar to currents; gusts are similar to surge. Bodies of water have a relatively small effect on the wind. Conversely, wind has tremendous impact on water. The impact of wind on water can cause more problems for dive safety than almost any other external force.

When reading the water divers must be aware of several related things. Wind blowing with a current may increase the speed and depth at which the current flows. Waves in such an area will probably decrease in height and increase in length. Wind blowing against a current will probably decrease the length of the waves and increase their height, making them more dangerous. An offshore wind will cause a short, sometimes violent chop to develop on the incoming waves

(swells). This condition may be difficult to cope with when trying to return to shore or a boat. An onshore wind may flatten and increase the length of incoming waves, making them easier to cope with on returning from a shore dive.

When there is a large land mass near a large body of water, the wind may be calm or blow offshore with less force in the mornings and get stronger, blowing toward the land mass, in the afternoons. This is because the air over the land will heat up and start to rise during the day. The cooler air over the water will then flow toward the land. The wind's force may be related to the difference in the air temperature over the land and water. Late afternoon winds may become almost gale force in many coastal areas.

Many early civilizations revered the sea as the mother ocean. Learn what mother ocean can tell you about your dive waters by reading the water.

UNDERWATER HUNTERS

Many divers are underwater hunters, including some who make study collections of marine life such as shells, coral and fish. Diver Jeff Bargeski collects shells for research. He recently reminded me researchers collect only in areas of abundance and then selectively. Collectors/researchers make their duplicate specimens available to others having similar interests. This reduces potential impact on the environment. Jeff recently completed his study on shells in the volute family. Anyone interested in the shells may write to him at 368 Carnegie Boulevard, Holbrook, NY 11741.

WRECK INFORMATION

Several SKIN DIVER readers have asked me for published sources about the location of two wrecks. One of these vessels is real, the other is a legendary vessel that never actually became a wreck.

The real wreck is the MS *Diamond Knot*, sunk off Crescent Bay on the U.S. side of the Strait of Juan de Fuca a few miles west of Port Angeles, Washington. The *Knot* sank as a result of a collision with the vessel *Fenn Victory* on August 13, 1947. She rests on her port side in 135 feet of water, with about 80 feet over her starboard side. Most of her cargo of canned salmon, valued at \$3,500,000, was successfully salvaged.

Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, with head offices in San Francisco, California, was the principal insurer. Fireman's Fund published a factual account of the sinking and salvage of the cargo. This 30 page booklet is entitled *The Story of the Diamond Knot*.

(Continued on Page 126)

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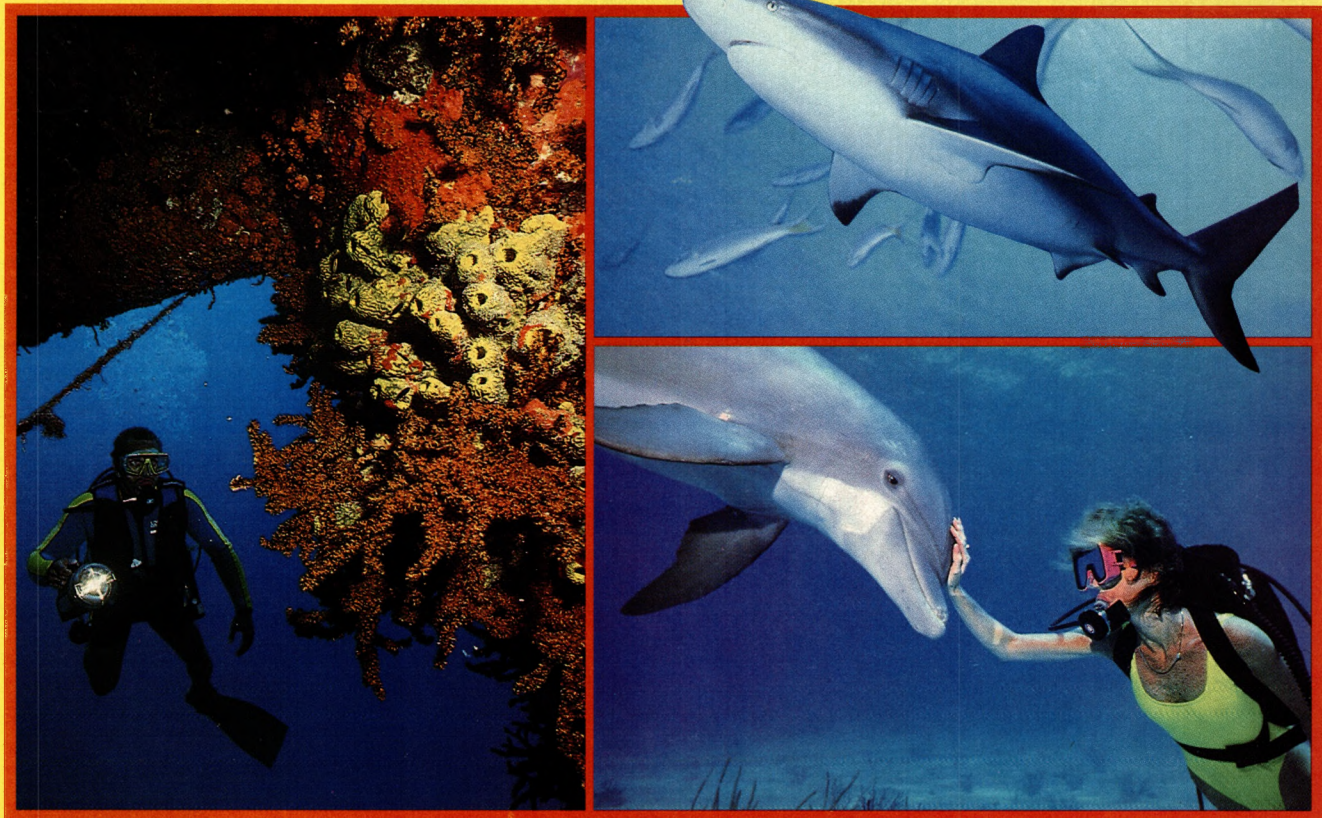
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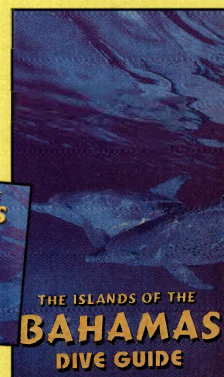
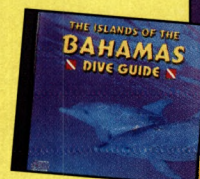
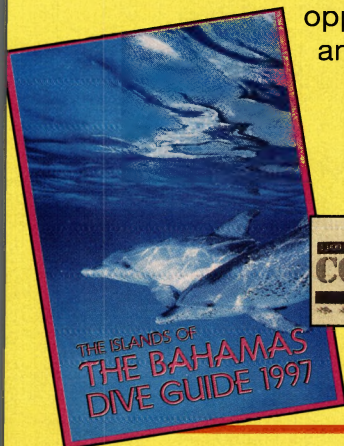
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Where Dolphins Roam

Roatan's Anthony's Key Resort

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEPHEN FRINK

In 1982, when I first visited Anthony's Key Resort on Roatan in the Bay Islands, it had already been in business for about 13 years. SKIN DIVER Magazines of that era printed images of pristine hard corals, giant Pillar Coral colonies and massive sponges bathed in brilliant blue water. Reefs rich in marine life, dramatic walls and a dedicated dive resort that provided wonderful service made Anthony's Key Resort an icon, high on every traveling diver's wish list.

A lot of bubbles have been blown, both by the guests of Anthony's Key Resort (AKR) and myself in the decade and a half between then and now. Yet, when I visited AKR again this winter, I was transported back to that time of magic in 1982. Despite the substantial improvements that had been made over

the years, AKR has managed to retain its unique ambiance as "The Resort Nature Designed." Once again I felt the privilege of having visited someplace very special.

ANTHONY'S KEY RESORT: The resort grounds cover 34 acres—some on the Roatan mainland and 9.4 acres on Anthony's Key, a palm studded island just 50 yards across the lagoon. There are 56 cabanas strewn along the dock, hillside and Anthony's Key. A complimentary water taxi constantly transports guests back and forth between Anthony's Key and Roatan, which is the setting for the restaurant, bar, dive dock, boutique and the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences (RIMS, more about this later). The water taxi

will also take guests to nearby Bailey's Key, a five acre nature reserve rich with native flora and fauna, as well as some great snorkeling sites. Bailey's Key is also home to a portion of the dolphin activity that has become so popular at the RIMS.

Having been in the resort dive business under the same family ownership for 28 years, AKR has learned how to please its customers. Guests are picked up at the airport and transported directly to the resort in an air-conditioned bus. Upon check-in you fill out your diving paperwork so you are free to board the dive boat the next morning. AKR staff will also handle your airline confirmation and ex-

(Continued on Page 45)



Top: Anthony's Key is a palm studded island hideaway with peaceful stilt cottages (inset) right on the water. Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins are a featured attraction of the nearby Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences.

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This season you won't want to miss the U.S. Windsurfing National Championships from Corpus Christi, Texas, where the best board sailors from around the world gather to match skills against one another.

And for those of you who don't have a sail on your board, tune in to "Surfer Magazine" and catch the ultimate waves in the South Pacific, Hawaii, South America and Africa. Then on "Surfer's Journal," follow

the incredible history of the sport through the camera lenses of its most famous photographers. It's all on the Outdoor Life Network.

For athletes who love the water, the West Gorge Windsurfing Association recommends you **call your local cable operator or satellite provider and request the Outdoor Life Network.**

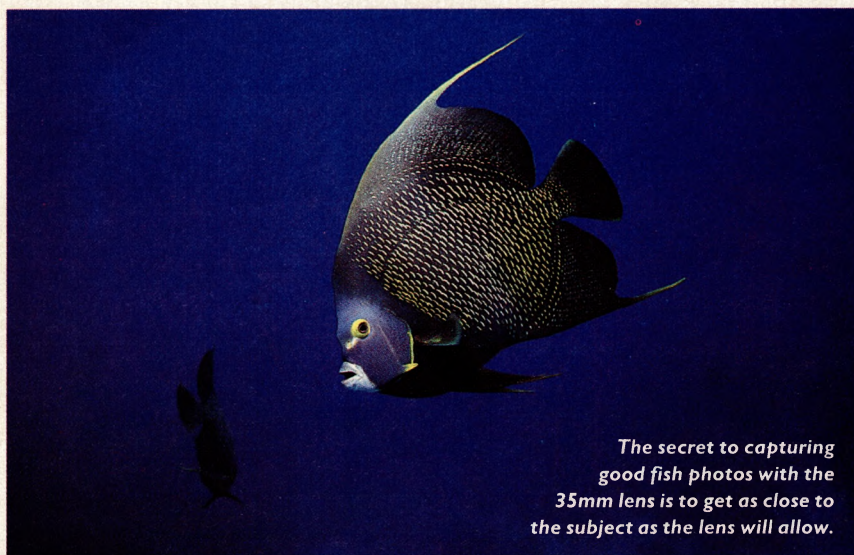
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Nikonos Hot Shots

Fish Pictures with the 35mm Lens

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY



The secret to capturing good fish photos with the 35mm lens is to get as close to the subject as the lens will allow.

Have you ever wanted to get great pictures of colorful fish? If the answer is yes, read on.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: This is one time you don't need any fancy lenses or accessories to get the job done. Use the standard Nikonos V camera and lens setup along with the SB 105 strobe. You will be amazed at the results.

The standard 35mm lens is almost perfect for shooting full frame photos of small to medium sized reef fish. Because this lens has a flat glass front window and is affected by refraction, it behaves more like a standard 50mm lens on land. The slight telephoto effect allows you to fill your picture frame while maintaining a respectable distance from an otherwise timid fish.

USE FLASH FOR COLOR: Use the SB 105 strobe to bring out the rich colors of your subject. This is especially true at close distances (four feet). The flash will also help improve your image sharpness and contrast against the background because you can use a lower f/stop.

EXPOSURE SETUP: Using ISO 100 speed film on a bright sunny day at a depth of 20 feet, set the lens aperture at f/8. Then, set

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the camera's shutter speed on "A" for automatic TTL exposure. Next, set the strobe on "TTL" and position the strobe head so it is directed at a point three feet in front of the lens. That is all there is to it.

CHECK YOUR EXPOSURE: The SB 105 has a built-in electronic circuit that helps you get a perfect exposure every time. When you fire the camera and strobe, glance over at the ready light on the strobe. If the little red light is blinking, it



Nikonos V with 35mm lens and SB 105 strobe.

means there was insufficient light for a proper exposure. Reset the lens aperture for f/5.6 and try again. If the ready light remains a steady red or goes completely dark for a few moments, you have confirmation of a good exposure.

GET CLOSE: The secret to great fish pictures is getting as close as the lens will allow. This will require the stealth of a ninja and often a great deal of patience. Sometimes you just have to wait for the fish to stop flitting around the reef. If you remain perfectly still, they will come to you. You can attain the maximum color, contrast and image sharpness at close distances (four feet) because light reflected from the fish travels just a short distance and is less filtered. Set your focus distance scale at 2.75 or 3 feet and carefully work your way close to your intended subject.

BUT NOT TOO CLOSE: The one limitation of the standard 35mm lens is the minimum focus distance. If you look on the distance scale (inside the lens), you will see that it will only focus to a minimum distance of 2.75 feet. Underwater, this distance grows to three feet, eight inches because of the flat glass front window and the powerful effect of refraction. Just like peering through your facemask, objects underwater appear 25 percent larger and closer. An easy way to measure minimum distance underwater is to extend your arm straight out and position the subject about one foot beyond your fingertips.

PARTING SHOT: If you shoot at very shallow depths (10 to 15 feet), you may be able to use an aperture of f/11. The brighter lighting and lower f/stop will produce greater depth of field and improved sharpness in your photo. 🐟



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*RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING ScubaLab test, August 1996.

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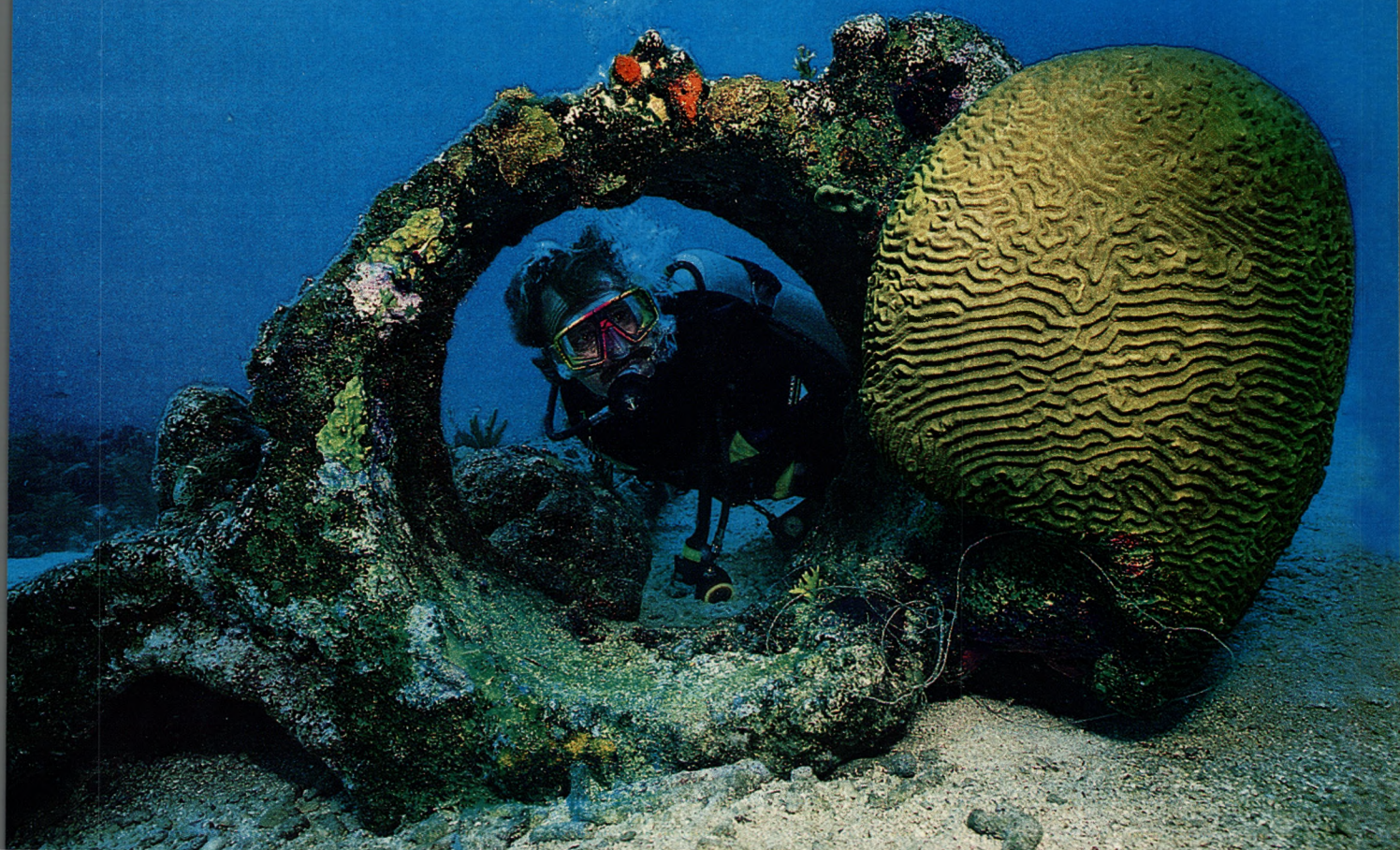
Dive the Shipwrecks of the Florida Keys

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN FRINK

In his book *Histories and Mysteries, The Shipwrecks of Key Largo*, Captain Thomas Scott estimates that there are at least 1,000 shipwrecks in the Florida Keys. Some rest in the unexplored abyss well offshore, their passing a mystery and their location unknown. Some, such as the **Wilkes-Barre** off Key West and the **Northern Light** off Key Largo, are known by the local dive community. While embraced for occasional technical dives utilizing mixed gases, they are too deep for recreational access. Others were wooden sailing ships that foundered hundreds of years ago on the fringing reefs that parallel the Florida Keys. Of these, little remains after centuries of waves and worms other than piles of ballast stones, anchors and cannons. Of course, there is the appealing hope of finding millions of dollars worth

of gold and silver coins, emeralds and silver bars the size of bread loaves. This happened to treasure salvor Mel Fisher when he discovered the **Atocha** after extensive research. Yet, even these treasures remained buried beneath several feet of sand and would have revealed little of interest to casual divers even if they had stumbled across the wreck.

There are, however, scores of modern shipwrecks found within sport diving depths throughout the Florida Keys. These are metal hulled ships able to withstand the ravages of the sea. Some were sunk by accidents of harsh weather or poor navigation, while others were placed on the bottom intentionally to serve as dive attractions. Collectively they comprise the best wreck dive portfolio in the Western Hemisphere and one that promises to get even better!



THE APPEAL OF SHIPWRECKS TO SPORT

DIVERS: Shipwrecks pose a dual attraction for sport divers. There is the primary appeal of exploring the remains of the ship, pondering what fate brought it to its watery grave. But, of equal significance, shipwrecks are artificial reefs of tremendous efficiency. When a ship sinks amid a natural coral reef, it provides additional nooks and crannies for fish to hide from predators and for predators to prowl while seeking an opportunistic meal. Copper Sweepers and Bigeyes lurk beneath the deck plating, grunts and Porkfish school beneath the shelter of the hull, moray eels find tubes and crevices in which to insinuate themselves and Barracuda are ubiquitous. Even when there is other natural coral habitat nearby, fish migrate to a shipwreck because of its tremendous efficiency as refuge.

Even more astonishing is the sheer density of marine life that accumulates around shipwrecks sunk along sand plateaus, areas that were essentially devoid of life before the wreck settled to the bottom. The *Duane* off Key Largo is a good example of the amazing ecosystem a shipwreck can become after just a decade on the bottom.

The *Duane* and her sister ship the *Bibb* were 327 foot U.S. Coast Guard cutters that were cleaned of contaminants, made safe for sport divers and towed from Boston to be sunk at designated sites seven miles off Key Largo. It was a project that cost more than \$150,000 and entailed a massive time investment by the Upper Keys dive community. The ships were sunk in November 1987, with the *Duane* resting upright at 120 feet and the *Bibb* settling on her starboard side at 130 feet. With a 40 foot beam the *Bibb* is first encountered at 90 feet but the *Duane's* crow's nest rises to within 40 feet of the surface and her wheelhouse and weather decks can easily be explored on a 100 foot dive.

I visited the *Duane* for the first time the day after she went down. There were already several Barracuda in residence. As time went by a light cloak of algae began to grow and, of course, fish that graze on algae were next. Parrotfish and angelfish were common on the wreck after she'd been down a few months and ever more Barracuda arrived. Grunts found the wheelhouse a perfect refuge and embryonic corals found a new substrate to colonize. Filter feeders, such as deep water gorgonians and sponges,

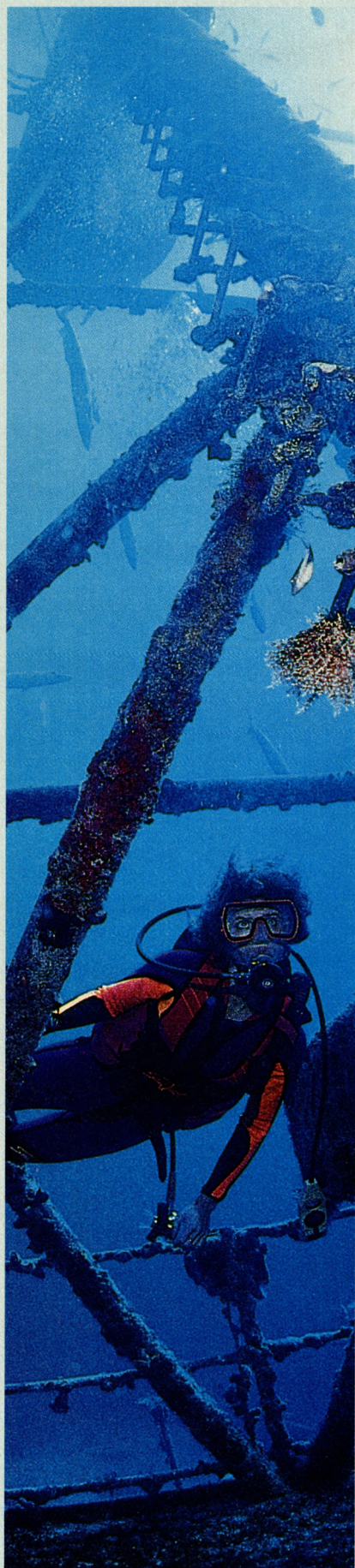
thrived as current borne nutrients were swept by, cloaking the white hull with splashes of brilliant crimson, yellow and purple. Eels found the wreck a good place to hide during the day and great hunting for their nocturnal predation. And, because the wreck is situated to take advantage of the flow of the Gulf Stream, pelagic creatures frequently pass by. Turtles and Eagle Rays are relatively common and several times each year Whale Sharks enliven an already exciting dive adventure.

Other popular wreck dives off Key Largo include the *City of Washington*. A freighter run aground off The Elbow in



1917, she is home to numerous semi-tame Barracuda and moray eels that have long been handfed by local dive operators. There is also the *Benwood*, a casualty of World War II. During the war there was considerable German U-boat activity off the Florida coast and, in an effort to minimize their appeal as targets, ships often ran at night without their lights. The *Benwood* was mortally wounded after a collision with another blacked-out ship. To avoid sinking in deep water, she was intentionally grounded in 35 to 45 feet of water. Her superstructure was later blown apart by the Corps of Engineers to eliminate a potential hazard to navigation. The *Benwood* now offers a reasonably intact bow section that harbors a resident school of Porkfish and scattered ribs and deck plating that attract diverse fish and invertebrate life.

The queen of the Islamorada wreck fleet is the *Eagle*. Built in Holland, she spent much of her career as an inter-island freighter plying Caribbean trade routes. She caught fire during a cruise in 1985 and the intense heat structurally ruined her. Now owned by the insurance company, she was one of hundreds of derelict vessels docked along the Miami River when local Keys dive operators and business interests banded together to buy her and prepare her for sinking as an artificial reef. The 268 foot ship was towed to her assigned site on December



19, 1985. Amid a salvo of explosives and pyrotechnics, she sank beneath the sea in just minutes.

The *Eagle* settled on her starboard side in about 110 feet of water. Her masts, crow's nest and propeller are popular foregrounds for wide angle photographs and her cavernous holds often attract Tomtate Grunts. Amberjacks commonly cruise the periphery of this wreck. In the dozen years the *Eagle* has been on the seafloor she has acquired a gorgeous patina of colorful encrustation.

The **Thunderbolt**, off Marathon, is another example of the wonderful addition a purposely placed shipwreck can make to the local dive portfolio. This 188 foot ship was formerly used as a cable layer and research vessel but, once her useful commercial life expired, she was given a second career as an artificial reef. The *Thunderbolt* was towed to her designated site in March 1986, anchored in place and scuttled in 115 feet of water. She settled perfectly upright, with the top of her wheelhouse within 70

1985. Local divers soon discovered the wreck resting on its side but fortunately a passing storm set her upright. Her superstructure is gone but her large open holds in only 60 to 70 feet attract schools of grunts. A Jewfish, rare anywhere in the Caribbean, is commonly seen on the *Cayman Salvager*. Joe's Tug sits perfectly upright in just 65 feet of water, her holds filled with grunts and moray eels living within the coral recesses surrounding the wreck. Incredibly, Joe's Tug also normally hosts one or two Jewfish.

The shipwreck program of the Florida Keys is ongoing and ever improving. Scheduled for sinking this summer off Key Largo is the 510 foot **LSD-32 Spiegel Grove**. This massive ship will be sunk in about 110 feet of water at a site near Dixie Shoals, north of the *Benwood* and south of The Elbow. She will be the largest shipwreck this side of Truk Lagoon. It is expected that her 80 foot beam and massive superstructure will bring her to within 40 feet of the sur-

face no matter how she rests on the bottom (of course we all have our fingers crossed for her to land upright). Scuba divers, snorkelers and even those riding the glass bottom tour boats will be able to enjoy the *Spiegel Grove*.

The dive operators in the Lower Keys are also hard at work on their own 500 foot shipwreck, to be sunk off Looe Key. Stay tuned for more information as the Florida Keys further rein-

forces its reputation as one of the world's premier wreck dive destinations.

The Florida Keys, the Islands You Can Drive To, are easily accessible via automobile but those who prefer to fly will do well to choose **AMERICAN AIRLINES**, *Something Special to the Florida Keys*, to Miami with connecting flights on **AMERICAN EAGLE** to Marathon or Key West. For reservations, call (800) 433-7300. For more information you can call **(800) FLA-KEYS** or visit the Web site at <http://www.flakeys.com>

feet of the surface. A large Barracuda now commonly resides in the wheelhouse and huge angelfish hide beneath the curve of the hull. The most distinctive aspect of the vessel is her huge cable spool on the bow, now vibrant with encrusting sponges and hydroids.

Key West has a long and active history of shipping, so it should be no surprise there have been shipwrecks. In fact, wrecking was one of the first major industries in this southernmost Florida Key. In the early decades of the 19th century, before lighthouses came to mark the most treacherous reefs, Key West became the richest city per capita in the United States by salvaging the spoils of shipwrecks.

The historical wrecks of this era remain of interest to marine archaeologists and treasure hunters but sport divers will discover a different kind of treasure on the modern day shipwrecks, **Cayman Salvager** and **Joe's Tug**. The *Cayman Salvager* lies in 90 feet of water, surreptitiously scuttled under cover of night in



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THE FLORIDA KEYS & KEY WEST
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Far-flung Treasures of the South Pacific

Fiji's Matana Beach Resort and Dive Kadavu

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL



When divers look for that perfect getaway they often look to really get away from it all. They want to explore new horizons, away from the mad-

ding crowds and dive sites listed in every diver's logbook. We recently discovered remote Matana Beach Resort and Dive Kadavu. The best part of its tropical isolation is that it offers some of the finest diving in Fiji.

When you arrive at Matana you will be met by owners Bob and Rena Forster, who will give you the grand tour. The accommodations are comfortable Fijian style thatched cottages called *bures*. Right on the beach, the *bures* have queen sized beds, private bathrooms and their own verandas. They are best suited for couples or families. Construction of four additional *bures* has begun, two should be finished by the middle of this month.

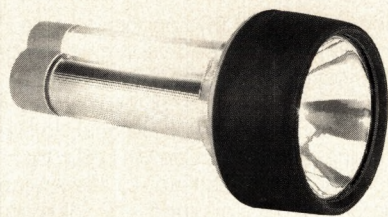
Kadavu, pronounced "Kandavoo," is the fourth largest of the more than 300 Fijian islands. Sixty miles south of Viti Levu, it is 37 miles long, with elevations up to 2,953 feet. Kadavu's terrain is so rugged it is virtually undeveloped. A huge virgin coral reef forms a ring around the island, which has a popula-



The reefs off Kadavu present some of Fiji's finest diving, with a colorful array of soft and hard corals. Inset: A welcoming Fijian smile.



*Background:
Dive Kadavu's
boat in silhouette
on a tranquil sea.*



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The Maxi C-Fluorescent combines a halogen lamp and reflector with the gentle illumination of a fluorescent lamp. The halogen lamp provides a spot beam to illuminate distant objects night or day.

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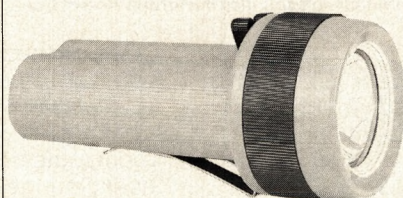


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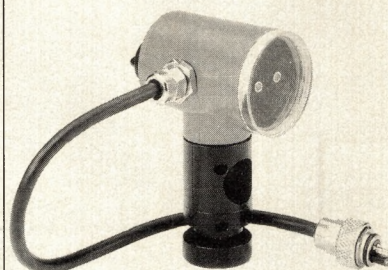


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The Substrobe 50 is a true 50 watt-second unit with a lightening quick 2.5 second recycle time. Comparable power with many strobes twice its size. Powered by 4 "AA" alkaline batteries provides 250 full power flashes. The small, compact size of the Substrobe 50 (TTL) makes it ideal for macro photography while powerful enough to illuminate and cover 28mm wide angle lenses. The 5700°K color temperature brings out the true colors in macro and close-up photography.

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MATANA BEACH RESORT/DIVE KADAVU

tion of about 12,000 people in some 70 villages. There aren't very many roads, so most transportation is by boat.

This remote wonderland is reached via a 10 hour flight from Los Angeles to Nadi International airport on Viti Levu, then a 45 minute flight to Kadavu. As you approach Kadavu's airport, you will be impressed by the steep hillsides covered with heavy vegetation. There is so much growth on this side of the island that the resort is almost obscured from view.

Guests are met at Kadavu Airport and transported to the resort by boat. Since you may need to wade to the boat at low tide, you should wear thongs or reef shoes. The adventure begins!



Sunlight streams into a Matana Resort bure.

SDM TRAVEL AT A GLANCE

Kadavu, Fiji is best known for:

- Tropical isolation
- Abundant dive sites within a 15 to 25 minute boat ride
- Beautiful soft corals
- Massive schools of fish

The common area next to the duplex consists of the dining room, outside deck, lounge, bar, library with books to swap and video facilities. Guests eat meals together

in the elevated dining area with a panoramic overlook. Meals consist of a nice cross section of international and local dishes and fresh fruit. A *lovo*, where Fijian food is cooked underground, is a special dinner treat. The bar stocks a large variety of soft drinks, spirits, wines, beer and snacks. The outside deck is a great spot to sit and trade dive stories over a Fijian beer at sunset. The library is one of the finest we have seen at any dive resort. There are so many books the owners have grouped them according to subject.

There are more than 30 moored sites on **Namalata Reef**, famous for its soft corals, and **Rooper Reef**, with its 210 foot freighter wreck, all within a 15 to 25 minute boat ride of the resort. Full day ex-

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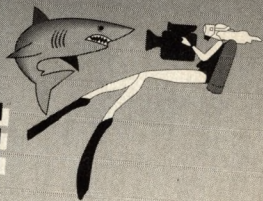
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MATANA BEACH RESORT/DIVE KADAVU

cursions are also made to **Ono Island** and **Astrolabe Reef**. Dives are made from one of several 28 foot aluminum catamarans that leave from the beach right in front of the resort. There is such a wide variety of diving available that the divemasters never visit the same spot twice unless it's requested. You can make up to four dives a day and, if that isn't enough, there is unlimited shore diving.

Dive Kadavu operates a PADI dive shop well stocked with rental gear for those who wish to travel light or might have forgotten something. The staff members take charge of guests' gear upon arrival and set it up on the boat. They wash the gear after each trip and set it up for subsequent dives.

DIVE KADAVU DIVE PROGRAM

Daily (regardless of number of divers):

Two tank excursion to Namalata/Rooper Reefs, departing at 8:30 am, returning by 12:30 pm.

Monday - Saturday (minimum 4 divers):

One tank excursion to Namalata/Rooper Reefs, departing at 2:30 pm, returning by 4:30 pm.

Monday - Saturday (minimum 4 divers):

One tank night dive, departing at 7:30 pm, returning by 9:30 pm.

Monday - Saturday (minimum 4 divers):

Three tank excursion to Rooper Reef/Astrolabe Reef/Ono Island, departing at 8:30 am, returning by 5:30 pm. The first dive is usually on the 210 foot freighter wreck on Rooper Reef. During the surface interval the boat moves to Astrolabe Reef for the second dive. Lunch is served at a village on Ono Island. The third dive is also on Astrolabe Reef.

Unlimited shore diving.

Dive Kadavu has recently added a high pressure line that runs all the way to the dive boats, making it easy to fill tanks without taking them off the boats.

Once you reach the dive site, you are given a briefing that gives you a thorough understanding of the reef you will be exploring. We found the divemasters at Dive Kadavu well qualified, friendly and very helpful. They were really great at finding animals for us to capture on film.

Although the diving here is virtually free of currents, there are wide expanses of soft corals in yellows, reds and pinks, all fully open and feeding, ready for you to photograph. Dive sites such as **Yellow Wall** offer hues that challenge even the finest color films.

Muai Cake was our first dive site. As we swam along a series of small bommies (coral heads) loaded with seafans, we came upon a hard coral that measured several feet across. And there was a small swim-though that seemed adorned with every color of the rainbow.

Once we hit the water at our next site, **Blue Tang**, we were surrounded by schools of the fish. There were also some

bommies carpeted with anemones and anemonefish. We never seem to get enough pictures of these characters.

At **Susa Ika** we had a very friendly encounter with a large Green Moray Eel. Soft corals covered the bommies and massive schools of fish swam among the coral heads. What a great way to spend a day!

Our final dive was at a site known as **Mellow Reef**. We thought the name meant it would be unexciting but underwater things were really buzzing. We spent part of the dive mesmerized by the pair of Jawfish that kept moving rocks from one place to the next. Nudibranchs were out in great numbers and everywhere we looked we encountered lionfish strutting their stuff.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Matana Resort also offers excellent swimming, snorkeling or unlimited diving just off the beach. A large shallow reef projects out from the shore to the left and ranges in depth from a couple of feet to more than 25. During the first few minutes we snorkeled it we found several anemonefish, starfish and a variety of other fish swimming among the healthy hard corals.

Other activities include paddleboards, volleyball, kayaking, waterskiing or just relaxing on the soft sand in the shade of the coconut trees. The rain forest behind the resort offers hiking trails with breath-taking vantage points.

Matana is a budget dive resort with personalized service. Nestled in a tropical hillside garden it caters to small groups of guests who have come to Kadavu to discover Fiji's friendly charm and fine diving. To us, Dive Kadavu, in almost any language, means come back soon!

FIJI BOUND

Flights to Fiji are available through Air Pacific/Qantas. The nonstop Air Pacific flight from Los Angeles to Fiji's International Airport in Nadi takes approximately 10 hours. Namale Resort, in Savusavu on Vanua Levu, is an hour's flight from Nadi via either Air Fiji or Sunflower Airlines.



Air Pacific/Qantas Airways
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For more information or reservations, please contact Matana Beach Resort/Dive Kadavu direct at 011 (679) 311-780 or fax 011 (679) 303-860. You can also contact Tropical Adventures Travel at (800) 247-3483, (206) 441-3483, fax (206) 441-5431, e-mail 103520.2014@compuserve.com or write to 111 Second North, Seattle, WA 98109. 🐟

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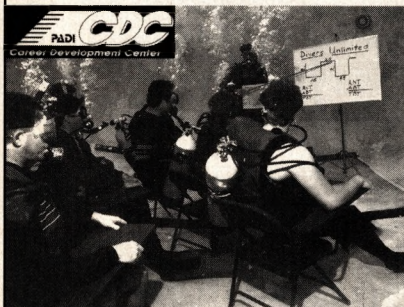
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SEA & SEA'S MX-10

(Continued from Page 12)

camouflage didn't fool you.

The MX-10 camera has film settings for either ISO 100 or 400. Color negative film works best in this camera and allows you to fill your scrapbook with "keepers." Every time you turn a page, you can relive the excitement and great colors captured by the MX-10. You



The MX-10 and its various accessories: 20mm wide conversion lens; YS-40A strobe; lens caddy; viewfinder; parallax viewing mask; macro lens and guide rod.

MX-10 SPECIFICATIONS

MX-10 camera.....35mm, amphibious
LensFixed, 32mm f/4.5
Depth150 feet
ShutterLeaf shutter, 1/100 second
Film Advance.....Auto
Viewfinder80 percent of frame
StrobeBuilt-in
Low ExposureRed light indicates available light too low
PowerTwo AA batteries
Dimensions3.7 by 6.2 by 2.8 inches
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of flashes100 w/alkaline 50 w/nickel-cadmiums
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ANTHONY'S KEY RESORT

(Continued from Page 32)

plain all the recreational options of the resort. They do it quickly and painlessly. Before you know it you'll be relaxing with a rum punch in the treetop bar.

The cabañas are simple—louvered windows overlooking the sea, a ceiling fan, a pair of beds and a bathroom. Yet, at AKR I've never felt the need for more. Television would be intrusive and air-conditioning would spoil the sense of being immersed in the natural beauty of the place. The meals are served family style, with a choice of several entrees.

Scuba diving is clearly a big part of why AKR exists and its dive infrastructure is among the best in the industry. There are six, island-built, 43 foot wooden dive boats, one 35 footer and plans to acquire a Rob Shirley Pro 48 jet drive. This fast, state of the art dive boat will open the possibility for day trips to the pinnacles off Cayos Cochinos and the sites off Barbareta.

A pair of 80 cfm compressors and 45,000 cubic feet of storage capacity assures divers will never miss a dive waiting for a tank to be filled. Convenient guest gear storage, a snack shop, dive store and a complete underwater photo center

SDM TRAVEL AT A GLANCE

AKR is best known for:

- Dolphin Dives and Snorkels
- Drift diving
- Abundant sponges and corals
- Nearby RIMS

featuring E-6 film processing, camera rentals, underwater video services and instruction are all available at the dive dock. There is even

an hyperbaric chamber on the premises.

AKR was recently awarded the coveted PADI Five Star Instructor Development Center accreditation. Scuba instruction remains a prime emphasis, with basic and advanced open water courses, 11 different specialties and even PADI Instructor Development Courses.

The system for diving couldn't be easier or more user friendly. There is the traditional sign-up board providing the daily dive options and three single tank dives each day, as well as scheduled night dives. The tanks will already be onboard, divers simply carry their gear a few steps to the boat. Ten to 15 minutes later divers will be making a giant stride into the calm, clear waters of the Roatan Marine Reserve.

Sites such as **Herbie's Place**, with its giant barrel sponges and abundant soft corals; **Green Outhouse Wall**, a drift dive where turtles are common; **Peter's Place**, a traditional favorite for Yellowfin and Black Groupers; the vertical precipice of **Wrasse Hole** and **Half Moon Bay**

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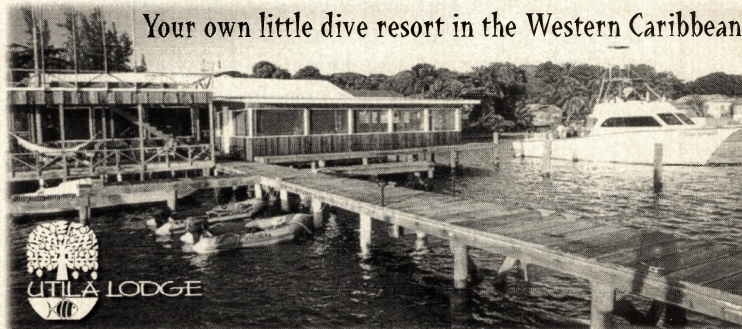


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ANTHONY'S KEY RESORT

Wall; and the fascinating eels and macro life typical of **Bear's Den** have long defined the high quality diving of AKR. Yet despite nearly three decades of dive service, the AKR dive staff, under the direction of Kevin Brewer, remains excited and motivated to discover new sites or find better ways to improve the dive portfolio.



The cottage interiors reflect the purposefully simple, nature-oriented experience of AKR, a true getaway from modern life.

ROATAN INSTITUTE FOR MARINE SCIENCES: Founded in 1990, the RIMS resides in a spacious educational center housing the research labs, library, audio/visual center and exhibits dealing with the natural history and geology of the Bay Islands, above and below the surface. The classrooms are used by educational groups, particularly students of high school and college age that visit year-round. Under the direction of education coordination and researcher Julie Dutcher, RIMS has undertaken an extensive project of reef monitoring to establish baseline data for water quality and the health of the reefs. In her words, the goal of RIMS is "to preserve Roatan's natural resources research program through education and research." One of the key elements of that concept is the Bottlenose Dolphin, which also happens to be one of the prime dive and snorkel attractions for AKR.

DOLPHIN PROGRAMS: Presently 13 Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins reside at RIMS, some housed in pens at Bailey's Key and others at the main RIMS facility. Four of these are babies born here during the past six months. The dolphins are an integral part of the ongoing educational programs, where visiting scientists and students study their echolocation and behavior patterns. An especially popular program is the new **Dolphin Discovery Camp**, where youngsters 8 to 14 can enjoy interactive sessions with the dolphins to learn about physiology, evolution, conservation and training techniques. This six day program is intensive, thorough and guaranteed to instill a reverence for one of the most wondrous creatures in the sea.

For divers and snorkelers in residence at AKR, dolphin education and appreciation is enhanced by free daily presentations at RIMS or dive or snorkel pro-

grams presented for an a la carte fee. The **Dolphin Snorkel Program** is staged in the large environmental enclosure at Bailey's Key in 3 to 15 feet of water. Snorkelers get to see and even touch dolphins. Small coral heads and usually clear water (unless it has been raining) present excellent video opportunities and the photo center is especially adept at making professional quality souvenir videos of the experience.

The highlight of my visit to AKR was the amazing **Dolphin Dive**. There were six of us signed up for the dolphin dive. We motored to a moored site just five minutes outside the channel. Head dolphin trainer, George Kieffer, brought a pair of dolphins to the site, swimming and leaping alongside his small boat. The amazing dolphin aerial acrobatics set the mood for an inspirational underwater encounter. We knelt in the sand just seaward of a high profile coral ridge and the dolphins swam among us, foraging for small crustaceans, playing, leaping and just generally having a good time. There were plenty of very close encounters, punctuated by the constant clicks of our underwater cameras. I have been diving long enough to know how rarely dolphins come close to scuba divers in the wild, so to have this opportunity to interact with *Tursiops truncatus* is unique indeed.



TACA's modern 767 and 737 jet aircraft offer convenient schedules from U.S. gateway cities to San Pedro Sula and Roatan.

For me, any aspect of the AKR experience is justification to return. The appeal is undeniable. For further information or reservations, phone Anthony's Key Resort at (800) 227-DIVE (3483) or (305) 666-1997 and fax (305) 666-2292. E-mail may be directed to akr@gate.net or you can find AKR on the Internet at <http://www.aventuras.com/anthony-key>.

Dive Notes

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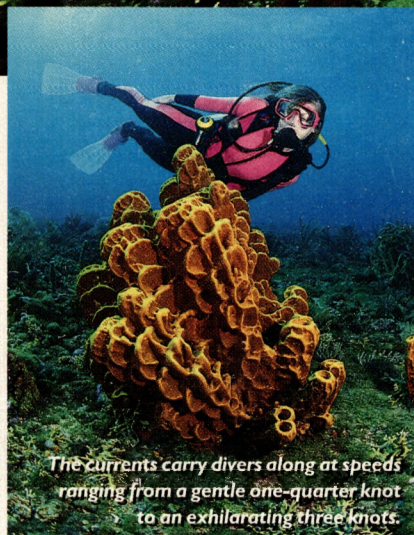
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Go with the Flow in Tobago

The Innovative Drift Diving Certificate Program



Stunning seascapes and magnificent sponge and coral gardens abound in Tobago's nutrient rich currents.



The currents carry divers along at speeds ranging from a gentle one-quarter knot to an exhilarating three knots.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY WALT STEARNS

We were drifting with the current less than a stone's throw from the rocky shoreline of Little Tobago Island. As we moved steadily along at about one-half knot, the vibrant reef with its luxuriant concentrations of huge soft corals and sponges was striking. There were all types of octocorals; searods and sea-plumes as much as seven feet tall and broad, deep water gorgonian fans in dark browns. With each minute the scenery seemed to get better. Intermixed among the thickets of soft corals were numerous branching tube and rope sponges. Long winding ropes stretched everywhere in bright yellow, deep red, jade green, purple and lavender. Orange Elephant Ear Sponges, either solitary or interlaced with some of the larger gorgonians, were also highly apparent. Among this wide range of colonial critters were numerous Giant Barrel Sponges, sculpted into weird, convoluted shapes by the current.

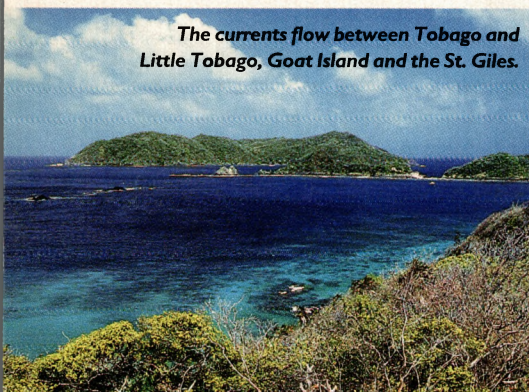
Darting up from the reef's sloping bottom to cash in on the bounty delivered by the moving waters were thousands of Brown Chromis and Creole Wrasse, resembling clouds of locusts blackening the sky. Mixed in their ranks were small

schools of Black Jacks, Black Durgons and Rainbow Runners. Visibility was well in the 70 to 80 foot range.

Other Caribbean destinations may claim to offer awesome drift diving but these claims pale compared to Tobago's incredible drifts.

Most divers venture to Tobago with the hopes of seeing Atlantic Manta Rays (*Manta birostris*). A rare find throughout the rest of the Caribbean and The Bahamas, Mantas occur fairly dependably in Tobago, making them the island's most publicized diving attractions. However, these delta winged, stealth bombers are most prevalent around the island's northeastern end during late April and into September.

The Mantas and the prolific nature of Tobago's reefs are the direct outcome of the island's unique location. It is nestled in the extreme southeastern corner of the Caribbean, 70 miles off the coast of South America. It is right in the path of two oceanic currents; the North Equatorial Current (the prelude to the Gulf Stream, which begins in the lower Caribbean) and the Guyana Current. This latter current follows the contours of South America's eastern coast and brings with it some of the nutrient rich effluent from the Orinoco River. As these



The currents flow between Tobago and Little Tobago, Goat Island and the St. Giles.

two bodies of waters collide and intermingle with one another, they create and support a rich ecosystem.

Tobago's currents travel anywhere from a gentle one-quarter knot to a fast, steady clip of two to three knots, flowing between Tobago and some of its satellites, Little Tobago, Goat Island and the St. Giles Islands. This is also where the most stunning seascapes and magnificent coral gardens can be found, including the Caribbean's largest single Brain Coral. The secret to enjoying the inspiring spectacle and thrill of Tobago's diving is to simply "go with the flow." All dives are conducted as drifts, with a divemaster trailing a float ball to mark the group's location.

SDM TRAVEL AT A GLANCE

Tobago diving is best known for:

- Manta Rays
- Drift diving
- Magnificent sponges and corals
- Diverse fish community

Tobago's northeastern region, near the small community of Speyside, on Batteaux



Bay, is the center of the island's finest diving and offers a wealth of top sites. Illustrating what even one drift can encompass is a site known as **Keleston**

TOBAGO'S DRIFT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Tobago's great drift dives have touched off a new Drift Certificate Program. Working with the Tobago Department of Tourism (TIDCO), the island's dive operators are presenting visiting divers with a free, specially signed document commemorating their drift dive experience. Printed on decorative parchment-type paper, the certificate is suitable for framing. It is awarded to those who enjoy at least eight of Tobago's drifts.

Drain, off Little Tobago Island and facing Batteaux Bay. Running parallel to the island, the dive starts on a 50 foot reef flat adjoining a mini wall that drops to 120 feet for a distance of 100 yards. Like most of the sites in the region, the terrain offers incredibly thick collections of sponges and soft corals. If you enjoy seeing adult Queen Angelfish, you'll be in paradise; it's not uncommon to see three to five grazing together in the corals.

About midpoint, the top of the reef crest gives way to a large, slightly sloping plateau rising from 60 feet to roughly 25. At 45 feet, divers will find one of the region's super large heads of Boulder Brain

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PHOTO: © CHRIS CRUMLEY/ EARTH WATER STOCK



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GO WITH THE FLOW IN TOBAGO

Coral (*Colpophyllia natans*). Resembling Houston's Astro Dome, this magnificent coral (a staggering 12 by 16 feet across and 8 feet high) is regarded as the largest specimen ever recorded in the West Indies.

Beyond the coral head, the reef turns into a mini wall, descending from 35 feet to a sand floor at 80. The top of the wall could have been named the Yellow Brick Road for its abundance of one to two foot tall Yellow Tube Sponges (*Aplysina fistularis*). Farther on the reef makes a slight turn outward, becoming a site called **Manta City**, so named for the Manta Rays found here when the season is in full swing (April to September). Here, the reef's bottom becomes a steep slope from a maximum depth of 75 feet to its upper plateau, 12 feet from the surface. From Keleston Drain to this point is roughly 360 yards. When the current is in gear, doing most of the work, a diver can cover that distance in 40 minutes without difficulty.

TOBAGO DIVE SERVICES

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Owing to the geography of the island and the nature of the diving (one to four sites are covered per drift), a diver making three dives a day for three days could see 19 to 22 sites. What's more, dramatic reefs and mini walls are not the only things Tobago has to offer; there are also pinnacle dives.

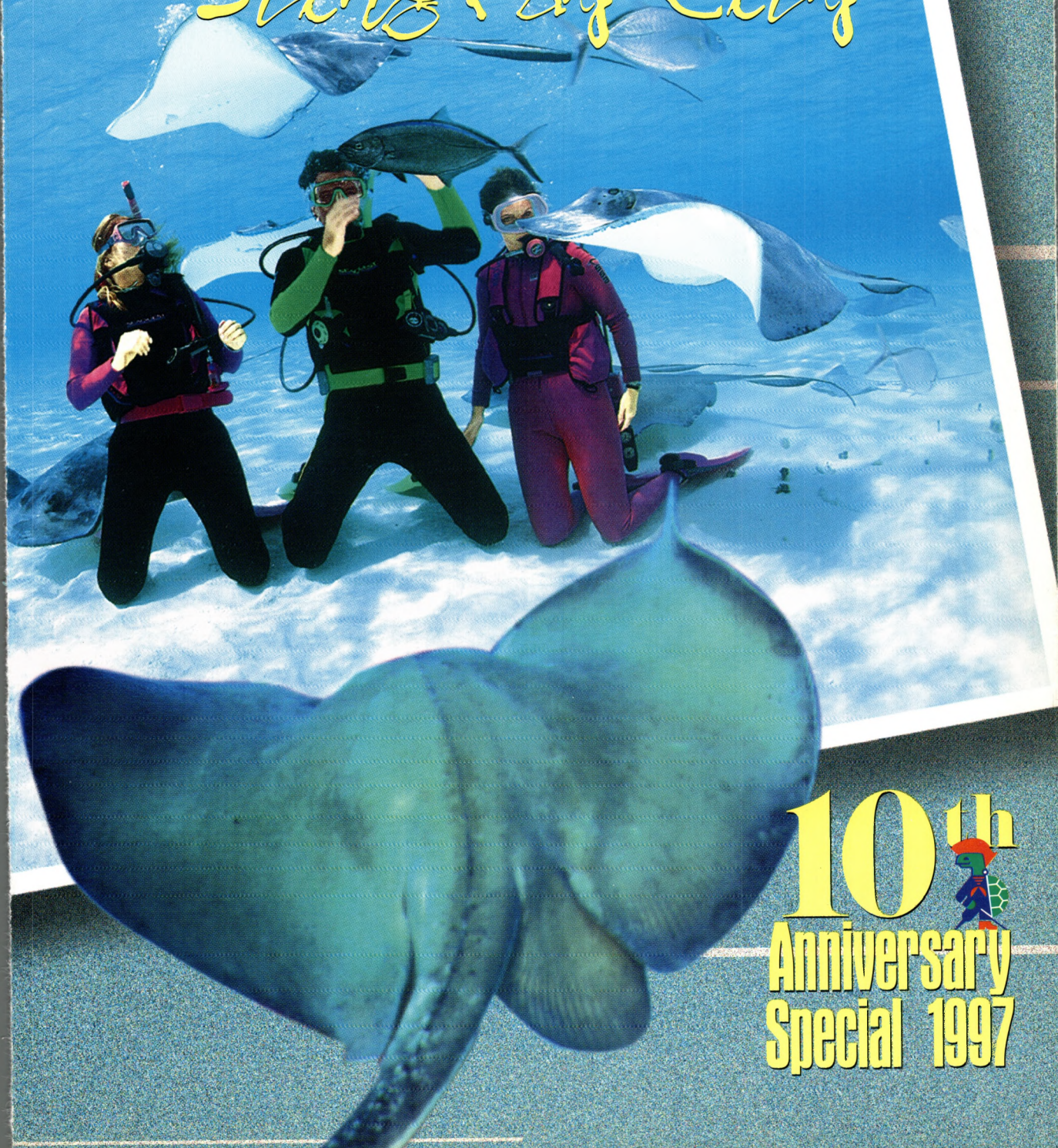
From Goat and Little Tobago Island all the way around the St. Giles to Culloden Bay on the northwest side are dozens of impressive volcanic spires. Their summits break the surface and the marine topography is one of rocky slopes laden with forests of soft corals, sponges and, of course, plenty of fish life.

Most of these sites offer great concentrations of finny denizens. In addition

(Continued on Page 51)

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Stingray City



10th
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The World Over Cheer Stingray at A Decade



Snorkelers Encounter Stingray City

You don't have to be a diver to experience the wonders of Cayman's friendly stingrays. Many snorkelers have enjoyed petting and playing with the rays.

Stingray Population Doubles!

It's estimated that there are hundreds of stingrays that maintain residence in Grand Cayman's North Sound.



91

1992

1993

1994

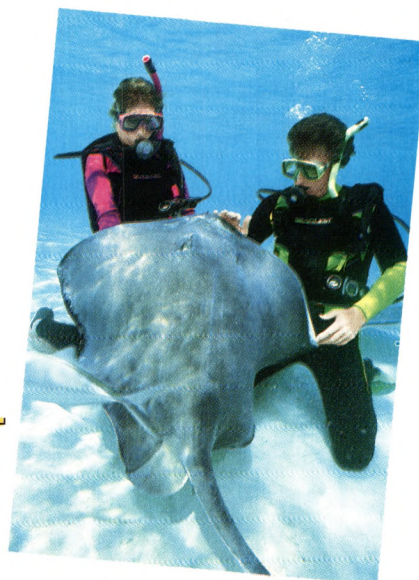


Stingray City: A Party Under the Sea!

Today, our stingrays are the most friendly and gregarious rays you will ever encounter. Visitors return time and again to dive or snorkel with and photograph these world-famous marine residents. Come to Cayman and celebrate the natural wonders of Stingray City.



**The Party
Continues...**



1995

1996

1997

Come Celebrate With Us!

"The beginnings of Stingray City date back to the early days of Grand Cayman when... Cayman fishermen would anchor in the calm waters of the North Sound and clean their day's catch, tossing the scraps overboard. While the first food encounters were accidental, the stingrays soon learned the connection between the anchored boats and food. I had always been led to believe that the southern stingray... spent most of its time lying quietly on the bottom, partially covered by sand. Yet, here was a group of the same creatures cavorting like circus clowns and appearing most un-ray like."

Geri Murphy, *SKIN DIVER* Magazine, September 1987

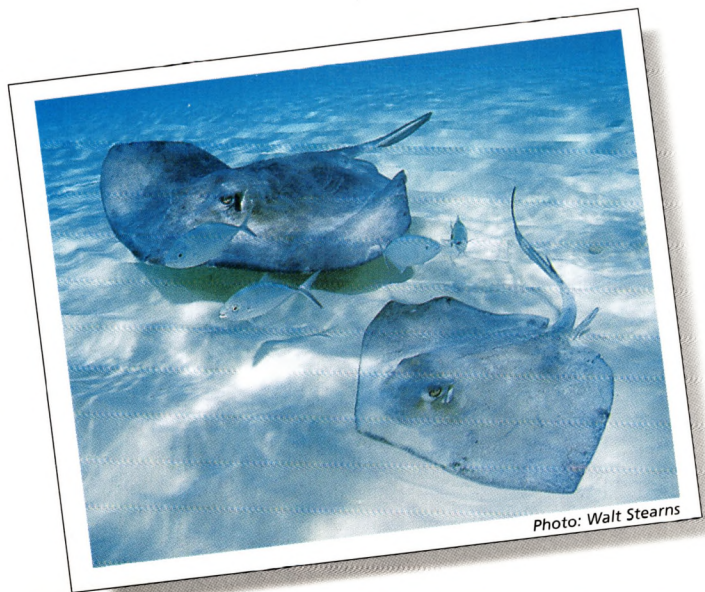


Photo: Walt Stearns

Today, 10 years after Stingray City gained recognition as "The World's Best 12 Foot Dive," snorkelers and divers from around the world have become enamored with these silky soft—and very friendly—marine animals. Come to Cayman and rediscover what it feels like to be a kid surrounded by a mob of friendly puppies just begging for a little attention!



Divers th “Wha

Stingray City is featured on the cover of SKIN DIVER and word spreads like wildfire that this is the place to dive. Photographers from around the world return time and again to capture the amazing stingrays on film.



The World's Best 12 Foot Dive Gains Recognition

Visitors Discover Sandbar



Just to the east of Stingray City is another playground where people and stingrays mingle in only 4 feet of water! The Sandbar is a wonderful place for divers, snorkelers and kids to interact with the congregating stingrays.

Stingray City Gets New Resident

The coral heads surrounding Stingray City are home to several moray eels that like to have their portraits taken!



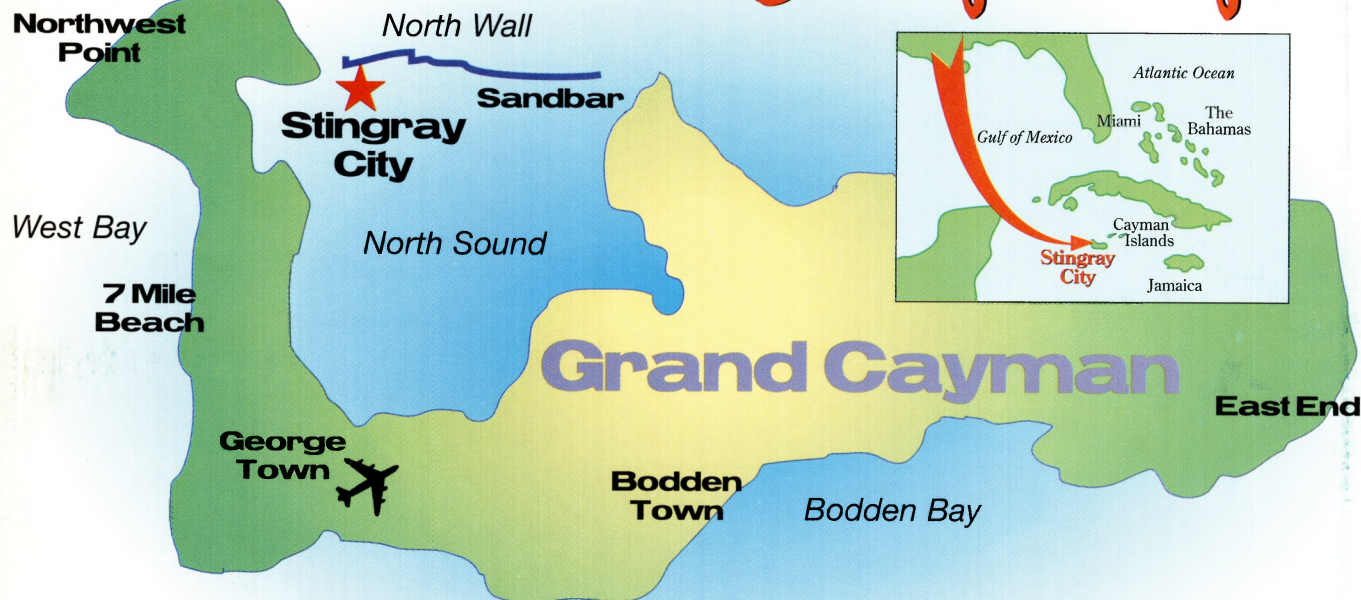
1987

1988

1989

1990

Where is Stingray City?



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"Those who know us, love us."

Photos: Geri Murphy • © SD/AD 1996



GO WITH THE FLOW IN TOBAGO

(Continued from Page 50)

tion to the more typically encountered clouds of Brown Chromis, Creole Fish, assorted species of jacks (including Black, Bar and Crevalle), Rainbow Runners and a few large resident Tarpon, these summits are also frequently visited by pelagics such as mantas, turtles, sharks, tuna, large Mackerel and big Barracuda.

The island of Tobago lolls in the seductive grace of intrinsic beauty, both above and below the water. There are steep mountains with dense, forested hillsides and valleys. The air temperature ranges from 84 to 86°F in the summer, occasionally dipping into the 70s during the winter months. Dress need only be light and casual. The people are warm and friendly, with a penchant for good times, apparent in the numerous carnivals and music festivals that take place annually. Soft spoken with a gentle air, English is the official language. The air-conditioned accommodations in various establishments are clean, roomy and quite comfortable. U.S. currency and most major credit cards are widely accepted. Cab fare to Speyside typically runs about \$35 dollars (U.S.), rental cars are also readily available.

TRAVEL

Tobago requires a valid passport for entry as well as a return ticket. The primary airline servicing the island is BWIA, with regular flights from Miami, New York's JFK, Toronto, Canada, London, Frankfurt and Zurich, with a



short stop at either Antigua, Barbados or Trinidad (depending on the route). There is a Miami to Tobago flight every Saturday and Thursday. The departure taxes and security fees total \$85 Trinidad & Tobago (\$15 U.S.) and are collected at the airport.

Experience Tobago's drifts and you'll want to return, again and again!

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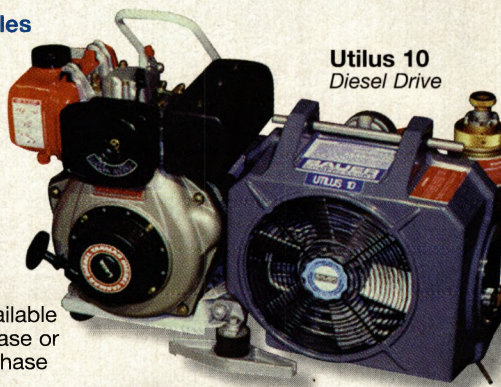
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Delivering the Best of Key West

Southpoint Divers Serves Up the Perfect Floridian Banquet

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY SHIRLEY VANDERBILT

The only bones you're likely to find in Key West are six feet below in the cemeteries. Well, there may be a few we don't know about buried in the sands beneath scattered wrecks, especially at sites such as the famous 17th century treasure ship found by Mel Fisher in the nearby Marquesas. Relentless hurricanes and the Keys' jagged reefs brought many a sailor to permanent

sleep on the ocean's floor during the days of explorers and conquistadors. At any rate, the Spanish apparently felt compelled to give this enchanting, tropical island a most bewitching name: Cayo Hueso, bone cay or "the isle of bones." Loose translations and loose tongues eventually transformed the name into Key West, which people frequently assume was derived from the island's position

at the far west of the Florida Keys. Whatever your theory, Key West remains a place of mystery and adventure, a blend of exotic wildlife and exciting street-life. It's more than just a dive destination—it's a celebration of life, both imported and indigenous.

It's no wonder this charming little island has attracted such an incredible cast of characters lured by nature's

riches; the touch of warm, salty breezes, the peaceful quiet of mangrove swamps, the beauty of fragrant tropical flora and spectacular sunsets. The town's history has been shaped by centuries of lively action, from the gold runs of the conquistadors to the dropping out of the hippie generation. Wreckers and pirates, turtle and sponge harvesters, cigar makers, brooding writers and a continual parade



of seamen all contributed to the uniqueness of Key West's culture. Against this backdrop, Key West is now a colorful playground for all types of tourists, from young to old. And today's visitors may gorge themselves on an array of delights for the senses, not the least of which are found along the island's richly populated reefs and wrecks.

Surrounded by waters thickly populated with abundant marine life, Key West's meager two by four mile island is chock full of historical homes of Victorian and Caribbean influence, many of which are now bed and breakfast inns. Museums, art galleries and theaters display the town's creative side while whimsical Duval Street touts an eclectic assortment of shops, saloons and eating establishments. The curtain rises each evening on spirited nightlife with the sunset celebration at Mallory Square. Here goggle-eyed tourists may view a quirky parade of artisans, jugglers, vendors and clowns while the sun slowly dips into the sea against a heavenly explosion of color.

SDM TRAVEL AT A GLANCE

Key West diving is best known for:

- Exciting wrecks
- Abundant marine life
- Large schools of fish

No longer identified solely as the last outpost of nonconformists and rebels, Key West has developed a certain sophistication toward

tourism and now offers not only the quaint charm and character of its early days but also a sleek, state of the art infrastructure. You might say Key West has finally gone high tech and leading the wave is Southpoint Dive Center, voted last year by both residents and tourists alike as Best Dive Shop in Key West (People's Choice Award). Using high technology to the tourist's advantage, Southpoint has continually upgraded services, keeping pace with the computer age and new advances in the dive industry. It's a marriage of the past and the future, as Southpoint's technology has opened the door for exploration of Key West's intriguing past along the reefs.

Whether it's a drone bomb from World War II resting at 60 feet or the 19th century kedge anchors embedded along High Rocks Reef, sites rarely accessed by recreational divers in previous years are now becoming routine fare for Southpoint's charter trips. The addition of an incredibly powerful Pro 48 jet drive custom dive boat has made it possible for Southpoint's crew to book these more remote sites within the normal dive schedule. With three engines and a top speed of 32 knots, the Pro 48 Manta offers 48 feet of luxury, comfort and safety for passengers, in-

(Continued on Page 76)

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Submersible Systems Spare Air

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED

BY TY SAWYER
PHOTO BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

Similar to many life saving devices, the inspiration for Spare Air came from a near death experience. Larry Williamson was hunting lobster in 140 feet of dark water off Catalina Island, California, when he found himself in an out of air situation. He barely survived and set out to ensure future divers could safely escape similar life threatening situations. Using his background in aerospace engineering he pioneered the smallest compact emergency air source available. It was an immediate success in both military and civilian diving applications. Since that time, he has received countless testimonials from divers whose lives were saved by the easy to use device he invented 17 years ago—Spare Air.

As with all great ideas, Spare Air is simple. It comes in two sizes, is user fillable and requires no special training to use. Both the larger Sport Diver 270C and the Pro 176C are 3,000 psi aluminum cylinders with a check valve (for filling), pressure indicator (for monitoring the amount of air in the tank), balanced single stage regulator, purge button and comfortable silicone mouthpiece. Both Spare Airs can be filled at the dive shop or with a special, easy to use attachment (Check Valve Refill Adapter) from a standard scuba tank. The tanks are exactly like the larger models used for diving and require annual VIPs and standard hydrostatic testing. Using either model is as simple as inserting the mouthpiece, purging the single stage and taking a breath. There are no buttons, switches or knobs to activate and no fuss. And, with a built-in pressure indicator, you will always know, at a glance, if your Spare Air is ready for action.

The larger Sport Diver 270C is the preferred model for recreational divers. The cylinder contains 2.7 cubic feet of air. This equates to approximately 48 breaths at the surface, based on an average breath of 1.6 liters. It weighs one and three-quarter pounds in air and its dimensions are a compact 11½ by 2½ inches.

The smaller size, the Pro 176C, is the preferred model for professional divers and instructors. The cylinder contains 1.7 cubic feet of air, which equates to 30, 1.6

liter breaths at the surface. Even more compact than the Sport, the Pro measures only 8¾ by 2½ inches and weighs a mere one and one-third pound in air.

Submersible Systems will launch a new refill adapter this summer. The new adapter allows divers to fill their Spare Airs from tanks with either DIN (European valves) or regular valves. The new adapter (which was unavailable at press time) has a small, versatile fitting that screws into a high pressure port of a regulator's first stage. This device offers the added convenience of not having to remove equipment from a tank to fill a Spare Air. Submersible Systems plans on selling the new adapter for \$54.

Several BC manufacturers now offer either optional or standard Spare Air mounting pockets—Dacor and Apollo BCs come Spare Air ready; Forte, IDI, Soniform and Zeagle offer Spare Air mounting pockets as an option. If your BC manufacturer doesn't offer this option, there is a universal mounting system and a safety leash available.

Spare Air units can be purchased separately or in convenient, all-inclusive packages. The packages include a Spare Air unit, Check Valve Refill Adapter and Universal Mounting System. The Pro package sells for \$285; the Sport for \$295. Purchased individually the Pro sells for \$233; the Sport for \$243. Spare Air is available in bright pink or neon yellow, steel blue, satin aluminum and black.

There is a great comfort in being prepared for an out of air emergency. After all, dive buddies and minds tend to wander. Self-reliance and self-responsibility are taught to divers from day one and repeated often, as they are being repeated here. While equipment failures are infrequent, human mistakes are all too common. Prepare yourself against both and the extra breath from a Spare Air could make a lifetime of difference.

For more information, contact Submersible Systems, Inc., at (800) 648-DIVE, (714) 842-6566.



Not much larger than a soft drink can, the Spare Air Pro (left) and Sport (right) are compact, easy to use alternate air sources for emergency out of air situations.

COMPARISON OF SPARE AIR MODELS

	Spare Air Sport	Spare Air Pro
Price*	\$243	\$233
Maximum Capacity	2.7 cubic feet	1.7 cubic feet
Maximum Pressure	3,000 psi	3,000 psi
# Breaths at Surface	48	30
Length	11.75 inches	8.75 inches
Weight in Air	1.75 pounds	1.33 pounds
Colors	Neon yellow or pink, anodized black or blue, or polished aluminum	Neon yellow or pink, anodized black or blue, or polished aluminum
Maximum Recommended Depth	130 feet	100 feet
Remarks	Recommended for sport divers and deeper dives.	Recommended for advanced divers who use less air or for traveling divers.

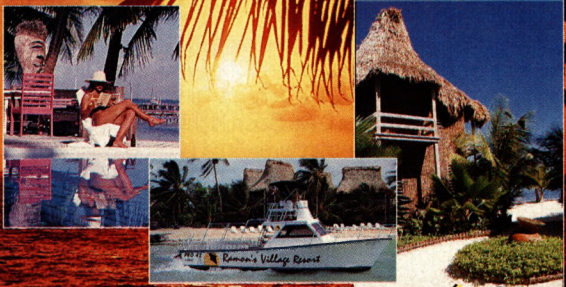
*Price does not include fill adapter or mounting kit. Colors cost \$20 more.

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS

- Fill adapter for scuba tank\$54
- Fill adapter for compressor.....\$24
- Universal Mounting Kit\$18
- Safety Leash.....\$16
- Seven Minute Video.....\$12
- Drawstring Nylon Bag.....\$12

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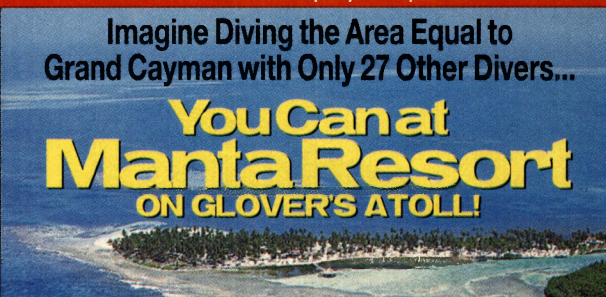
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1997 WEEKLY DIVE ITINERARY

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Monday Lighthouse Atoll	Thursday Glovers Atoll	

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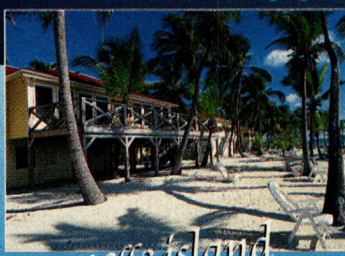
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U.S. Tech's EX

EASY AIR, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

BY JIM WALKER
PHOTOS BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

T rue diver confidence is knowing your regulator can handle a wide variety of conditions, all the while providing steady, high performance airflow. When you can fine tune that airflow as the need arises, you've got it all. Such is the case with the EX regulator from U.S. Tech. Incorporating a proven design that is both high performance and rugged, it has the added benefit of second stage adjustability.

FIRST STAGE

The first stage of the EX is rugged marine grade brass, with an elegant, satin chrome finish. Built to handle tank pressures as high as 3,300 psi, it utilizes a flow-through, balanced piston valve (stainless steel piston) to provide a consistent intermediate pressure of 135 psi, regardless of scuba tank pressure. You'll get the same easy breathing at the end of a dive as at the beginning. Enhancing this rugged, proven design, the EX can be set up with an optional environmental protection kit.

The EX first stage can be purchased with either a yoke or DIN connection. It has two high pressure ports ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch) on the main body and four low pressure ports ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) on a swivel. This port arrangement should always allow convenient hose positioning. The second stage hose has a large bore to ensure unrestricted airflow and there is a hose protector at the first stage junction.

SECOND STAGE

The second stage of the EX is built of impact resistant ABS polycarbonate, so it's lightweight and tough. The spirited design includes a

low profile exhaust tee made of soft rubber and a sleekly, tapering

hose/bushing protector of the same material. A clear silicone mouthpiece and accents of blue set against the body of black complete the attractive picture.

The EX second stage enhances the high performance airflow provided by the first stage in two important ways. First, its downstream, lever action demand valve requires very little inhalation effort or cracking pressure, regardless of depth. Second, the diver can manually adjust the cracking pressure via the blue sensitivity control knob on the outside of the case. Rotating through four complete revolutions, the knob controls the spring tension the valve has to overcome to provide air. Turned all the way clockwise, the tension is set on maximum. This high cracking pressure will help prevent freeflow on the surface or when swimming into a current. Turning the knob counterclockwise decreases the cracking pressure, providing increasingly easier inhalation. When swimming hard, the diver

(Continued on Page 153)

The sleek EX features a first stage (top) with a satin chrome finish, balanced flow-through piston design, two HP and four LP ports on a swivel. The high performance, easy breathing second stage (above) is lightweight and features a sensitivity control to adjust airflow to conditions or personal preference.

COMPARISON OF U.S. TECH REGULATORS

	EX	SP
Price	\$350	\$310
Internal Design	Balanced flow-through piston	Balanced diaphragm
External Design	L-shaped	T-shaped
Ports	2 HP/4 LP	1 HP/4 LP
Environmental Seal Kit	Yes, optional	Yes, optional
Hose Diameter	3/8 inch	3/8 inch
Case/Cover	Polycarbonate	Polycarbonate
Valve Design	Downstream lever action	Downstream lever action
Air Exhaust	Under chin	Under chin
Mouthpiece	Clear silicone	Clear silicone
Warranty	Five year, parts and service	Five year, parts and service
Comments	A high performance regulator, offering the same easy breathing from the beginning to the end of the dive. Second stage sensitivity control allows diver to set air flow to match conditions.	Another high performance regulator, suitable for most types of diving.

SKIN DIVER MAGAZINE'S

SNORKELING

TOURBOOK

**Take a
Peek at
the Reef's
Condo
Critters**

**Bonaire's Haven
for Snorkelers**

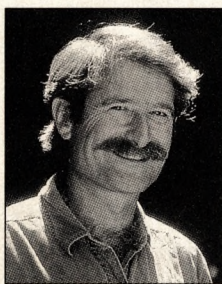
**The Freediver's
Choice: Low
Volume Masks**

PHOTO/STEPHEN FRANK

Snorkeler's Perspective

A Touchy Subject—Gloves

BY JOEL SIMON



During a recent guided snorkeling program in the Caribbean, several local operators informed my group that gloves were no longer welcome attire for snorkelers or divers.

Clearly, the intention is admirable—to better conserve the health and integrity of the reef—and the assumption is understandable—prohibit gloves and, consequently, snorkelers and divers will no longer touch and thereby damage fragile coral. Legislation is one approach but wouldn't a little education be a more appropriate solution?

I join many of my industry colleagues in the belief that divers and snorkelers don't deliberately harm the reef. The damage that gets done is either innocent or accidental. Logically, the best remedy is to remove the innocence and prevent the accidents. This calls for education and training.

Many resorts have orientation briefings, where "no gloves" policies are presented. At the same time, it would be easy and perhaps more effective to explain that corals are delicate creatures, vital to the well-being of the overall reef ecosystem. Even an innocent hand on a living coral colony can do it harm.

In my tropical marine biology classes, we explore both the strengths and vulnerabilities of the reef. Corals are subjected to many natural disruptive forces, including storms, Crown of Thorns Starfish, parrotfish, silt, changes in water temperature and disease. All contribute to the destruction and, in fact, the evolution of coral. The success of any species is contingent upon its ability to adapt to environmental changes. The archaeological record suggests corals have done well; enduring ice ages, volcanic eras and countless miles of continental drift for more than 400 million years.

In contrast, during only the last 35 years or so, divers and snorkelers have added a new set of environmental pressures to the

realm of shallow tropical seas. As a byproduct of permanent moorings at popular underwater sites, specific areas are exposed to hundreds or even thousands of aquatic visitors each year. While we can't muzzle the parrotfish, harness the weather or anchor the continents, we can control our hands—regardless of whether or not they sport gloves.

Perhaps even more important than our hands are our feet. Divers and snorkelers are usually well aware of their hands but, all too often, it's the errant fin-clad foot that accidentally, and sometimes significantly, impacts corals. If a "no gloves" policy makes sense for hands, then a "no fins" policy makes equal sense for feet. All too often, I have seen a diver or snorkeler who, out of a sincere desire not to touch or damage coral with naked fingers, is compelled to use fins in ways detrimental to the reef. Either these fins actually hit and break corals or swift kicking stirs up sediment that harmfully settles on living polyps. Quite often, these situations could have been avoided by a gentle, controlled push with one or two fingers, gloved or not.

These predicaments illustrate a simple need for better training. Rather than restricting the use of gloves (or fins), our efforts at conservation may be more productively served by encouraging snorkelers and divers to improve their ability to control their position and movements in the water.

Safe snorkeling (and diving) is universally approved and gloves can be a valuable safety measure should an accident occur. I wear a helmet when riding a bicycle but this protection doesn't tempt me to crash head-first into trees, cars or buildings. Similarly, there's no reason to believe that using gloves will tempt conscientious snorkelers and divers to wantonly maul delicate corals.

With a little "hands-on" training and education, we can all more effectively keep hands (and feet) off the reef.

This is a "touchy" subject and we invite your comments. Letters can be sent to Joel Simon, c/o SKIN DIVER, 6420 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048 or e-mailed directly to JSPhoto@aol.com. 

Inside

Snorkeling Tourbook

Brought to you by:

Joel Simon, **Editor**

Tamara Collins, **Executive Editor**

Susan Grube, **Art Director**

Tammy Peluso, **Contributing Editor**

Snorkeler's Gearbag



*Low Volume
Masks: The
Freediver's
Choice*

Life on a Shallow Reef



*Take a Peek at
the Reef's
Condo Critters*

Bon Voyage



*Bonaire's Haven
for Snorkelers:
The Sunset
Beach Hotel*



Low Volume Masks: The Freediver's Choice

BY TAMARA COLLINS
PHOTOS BY BONNIE J. CARDONE



**SCUBAPRO
FUTURA 2**

freedivers, a low volume mask is the answer to easy equalization.

An added benefit of low volume masks is possibly a better viewing angle. Some divers find that, with the glass set closer to the face, their viewing area is slightly wider. There is also less space to purge water from in the event the mask leaks. If the seal doesn't sit right on the face, water can seep in. Most mask manufacturers have corrected this problem with a double face seal but this added defense can be a problem for freedivers who experience mask squeeze. The extra layer of silicone adds another edge that can cut into the face when mask squeeze occurs.



**MARES
VENTOSA**

of silicone adds another edge that can cut into the face when mask squeeze

occurs. It is the proverbial Catch 22—the possibility of a flooded mask or the comfort of a single layer of silicone.

The three masks featured here are all low volume. Two have double face seals; the Mares is the lowest in volume and features a single face seal. Your best bet is call the manufacturers and ask for the address of a dealer in your area. At the dive shop, you can try each mask until you find the one that fits your face and affords the most comfort.



**SEA QUEST
VISION 2**

IN BRIEF

Scubapro Futura 2

Features: Low volume, split window, pivoting strap fasteners, double edge face seal

Fit: Medium faces

Colors: Clear skirt: Neon yellow, pink, clear, blue. Graphite skirt: Blue, black, neon yellow, pink

Options: Futura 2 Diopters; Bright Sight, anti-fog "Thrama" light equalizer accessory lenses; clear or graphite silicone skirts

Price: Standard frames: \$59.90; Hot Frames: \$99.50 (anti-fog lenses at no extra charge)

Information: (888) 801-8382

Sea Quest Vision 2

Features: Double lens, hypoallergenic silicone, double edge face seal, large nose pocket, tempered glass lenses, self-locking easy adjusting buckles, low to mid volume

Fit: Medium sized faces

Colors: Seven color combinations

Price: \$44

Information: (619) 438-1101

Mares Ventosa

Features: Super low volume, single face seal, split lens, liquid silicone skirt, technopolymer frame, split head strap, swiveling, easy adjusting buckles

Fit: Small to medium faces

Colors: Yellow, blue or black frame with black or clear skirt

Price: \$64.95

Options: Optical lenses

Information: (800) 874-3236



Bonaire's Haven for Snorkelers: Sunset Beach Hotel

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOEL SIMON



Life beneath tropical seas is a world only the scuba diver or snorkeler can fully experience. And, the arid Dutch island of Bonaire, just 50 miles off the coast of Venezuela, is one of the best Caribbean destinations to learn the skills and enjoy these activities. This is no accident. While neighboring islands developed economies based on commerce, shipping and industry, Bonaire shepherded its primary resource—a lush band of fringing reef surrounding the entire island.

On Bonaire, turtles have been legally protected since the mid-1960s. In the mid-70s, when spearguns were as popular as underwater cameras are today, Bonaire did the unthinkable and outlawed spearfishing. Bonaire's fish became numerous and friendly. In 1979 Bonaire once again made an unprecedented move, legislating a Marine Park that totally protected everything, living or dead, from the mean high tide line to a depth of 200 feet, including the area surrounding the small adjacent island of Klein Bonaire. Boats were prohibited from dropping anchors. The reefs thrived. Today, Bonaire stands proud as a world leader in underwater resource management.

Abundant friendly fish, calm, clear water, fringing reefs with shallow terraces and an ethic of marine conservation combine to provide a perfect environment for superb snorkeling. Bonaire offers snorkeling visitors a wide choice of accommodations but, for excellent value and an idyllic beach, none compares to the Sunset Beach Hotel.

Visions of tropical paradise are as unique as each individual. Not surprisingly, however, the most consistent element is a palm studded beach. On Bonaire, that vision approaches reality most closely on the 600 foot stretch of white sand that flanks the Sunset Beach Hotel. Playa Lechi is the largest natural beach on Bonaire and offers one of the most delightful venues for snorkeling, swimming, sunbathing, casual dining or simple relaxation.

Interspersed among the abundant palm trees, the hotel has augmented the beach with numerous lounge chairs and thatch covered umbrellas, providing a shady canopy for small circular wooden tables. Sitting at one of these tables, two women still dripping with salt water were engaged in a debate over a fish identification book. "It had

white spots on an orange body," said one woman.

"Are you sure?" said the other. "I thought the body was more golden brown with darker spots." Before they could agree, up ran an energetic girl, mask and fins still in hand, exclaiming: "Mom, Mom, it's still here. I found the same Spotted Drum we saw last year and in just the same place!" Quickly, they turned the pages of the book until they located the entry on Spotted Drums.

As I passed by, the young girl looked up with an eager smile and asked if I would like to go see her Spotted Drum. How could I resist?

Just off the center of the beach is a shallow, rocky area and, as we snorkeled in calm water, nine year old MaryMae gave me a guided tour of her favorite fish; parrotfish, Trumpetfish, Needlefish, filefish, grunts, tangs, flounders and the Spotted Drum. She knew them all. Afterward, she introduced me to her mother, Johanna, and her Aunt Betty who invited me to join them for a beer. How could I refuse?

"This is our third year at the hotel and we love it," said Johanna. "I can't imagine going to another hotel because of the beach—along with the lounge chairs, the bar, restaurant and the fish. It's all right here."

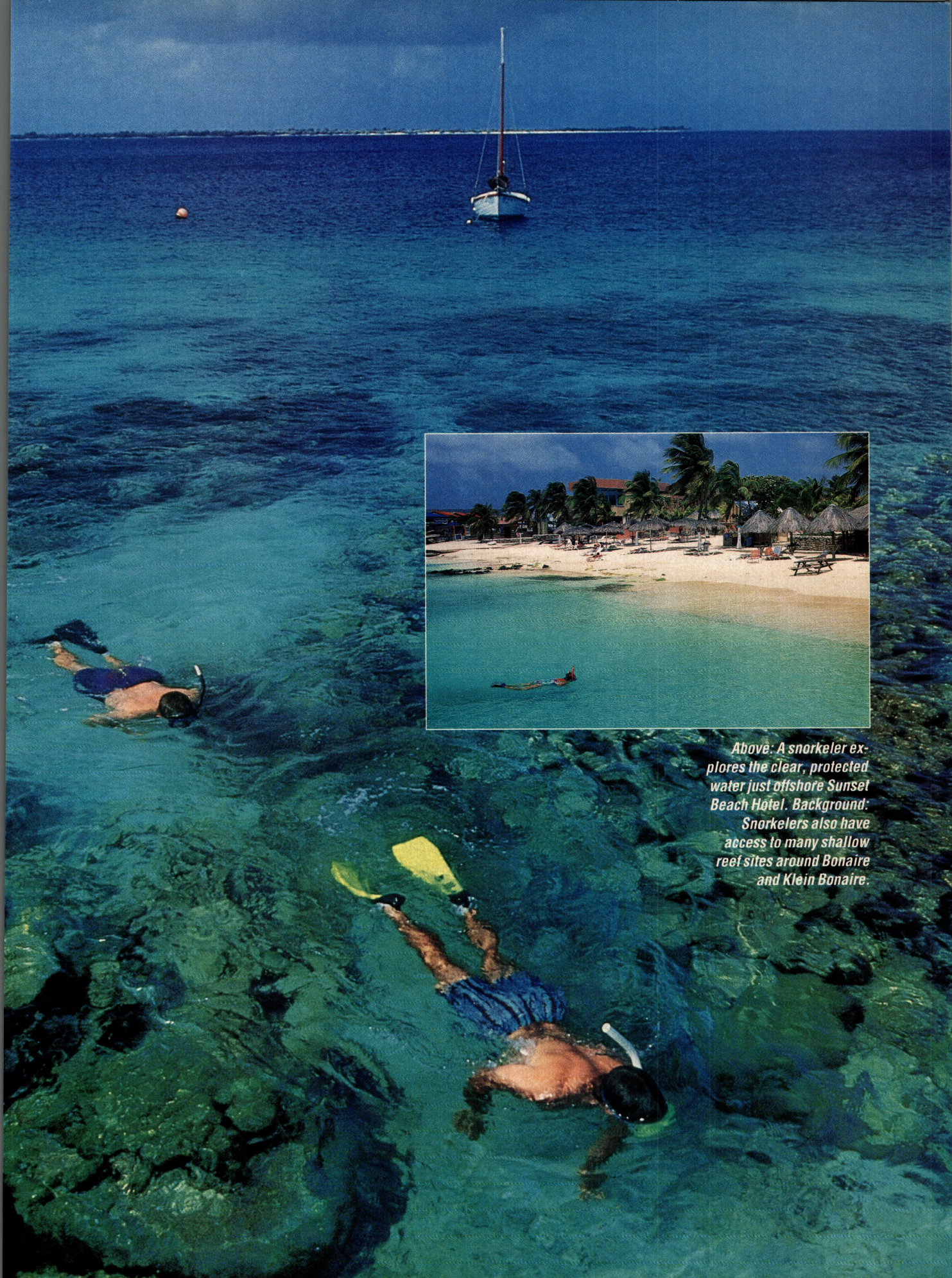
Later, I met with Mary Disanza who, along with Walter Stark, manages the diving and snorkeling operation. Mary and I sat at a table near the rinse tanks, which are conveniently just in front of the shop.

"We are a PADI Five Star Dive Center but we love snorkelers here," said Mary. "Just look at the beach. We get far more snorkelers than divers simply because the snorkeling is so excellent. Snorkelers are always welcome to accompany divers on any of our boats as well. In general, we go out at 9:00 am and 2:00 pm. And I always let the snorkelers know which destinations will work best for them." The dive center has three boats: the 38 foot cathedral-hulled flattop *Sea Explorer*, the 36 foot V-hulled *Sea Culi* and the *Sea Horse*, a 38 foot craft with a broad open transom that makes exits and entries very simple. All boats are designed to meet the needs of divers and snorkelers with covered areas for shade, along with deep, sturdy ladders.

The shop also offers a full line of rental equipment, including single-use cameras ideal for snorkelers, lights for night snorkeling and a limited supply of prescription faceplates. "We feel it's important people see our underwater attractions," said Mary, "so we decided to try renting corrected-vision masks. If it's a matter of just being near or farsighted, we usually can come pretty close to matching a person's vision needs.



Above: A snorkeler explores the clear, protected water just offshore Sunset Beach Hotel. Background: Snorkelers also have access to many shallow reef sites around Bonaire and Klein Bonaire.



This has been especially useful for snorkelers, since they can't always get as close to the reef as divers."

Mary pointed to a large black and white two masted sailboat moored just off shore. "Snorkelers also enjoy taking a pirate cruise on the *Mistress*, that 56 foot Privateer ketch. Mike and Jules Stadnick do an excellent job and usually take folks to great snorkeling sites on the backside of Klein Bonaire. And we also have a water taxi that will take snorkelers over to Klein anytime they wish.

"We also have people coming here for the Guided Snorkeling Program, which adds an educational component to the activity." About a year ago, with sponsorship from the island's government, hotels and watersport operators, Bonaire implemented one of the most ambitious projects in the world of snorkeling. The program combines classroom experience in the form of 12 entertaining half hour slide lectures, with training and snorkeling outings to some of Bonaire's premier shallow water destinations.

"We're really flexible on what programs we offer, depending on what interests our guests the most. One of the most popular has been the fish ID program. First, we take a

look at the slides and then go find the fish in the water."

Mary suggested we take a walk out on the wooden boat dock. "People love snorkeling around this dock because over the years it's become absolutely covered with marine life, especially Orange Cup Corals." The pier is one of the oldest on the island. For Mary, it's a little like snorkeling amid a Maya ruin.

Two young girls, Natalie and Janell DeWalt, were on the pier, one dressed in a colorful plastic innertube. They watched as their mother and brothers, in the shallow water below, came face to face with an inquisitive giant French Angelfish. Natalie volunteered, "We live on the island but mom, who was a scuba instructor here before she met Brian, takes us here with our grandparents to snorkel and have lunch. I like the hamburgers and French fries best!"

Dining at the outdoor thatch covered palapa is casual and enjoyable. The locally famous Kunuku Band plays each Monday afternoon at the manager's cocktail party. The restaurant also offers weekly beach barbecues and a Bonairean Buffet featuring local cuisine and a lively folkloric dance presentation.

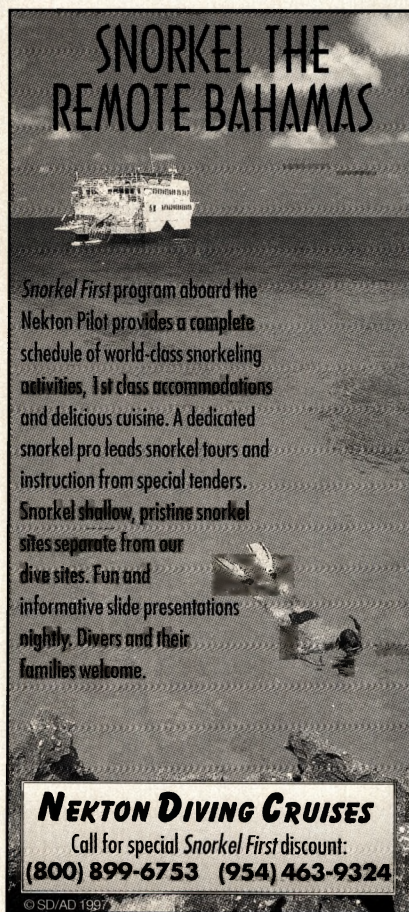
Under the shade of a large tamarind tree near the restaurant sat a mature couple, obviously content with life on the beach. It was Emile and Lillian Jacob, from Newark, New Jersey, perhaps Sunset Beach Hotel's best known visitors. "We've been coming here every year for 34 years now and we love it," said Lillian. "When we first arrived, this tree had only enough shade for Emile and me. Now it can easily shade at least ten people. We've seen the island grow and change, but this place has been our sanctuary over the years. We've seen kids on this island grow up to have families of their own. Just yesterday one hotel staff member we met as a young man years ago invited us to his grandchild's birthday party. We really felt like part of the family."

Just then a neatly dressed man approached and Lillian began pointing an insistent finger at him, saying she wanted to book now for next year. After giving her a gentle hug, he assured Lillian that their room would be available, as it had for the last 34 years! "Are you sure?" she said with a smile, "because we are!" The man was David Hickey, operations manager for the resort.

Over a soft drink at the bar David commented, "What we do best is work with people. That's what this hotel is all about, people taking care of people. Our guests stay here for

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the casual, friendly ambiance. Our staff is really committed to the place, as are our guests. This gives the hotel heart and is the most important element we have to offer." David outlined upcoming plans for renovation of the hotel, which was one of the first on Bonaire. Everything is in place—the plans, materials and financing. Only the starting date needs confirmation. The hotel has 145 spacious rooms, all equipped with air-conditioning, cable TV, direct dial telephones and refrigerators. A giftshop, seaside freshwater swimming pool, watersport hut with sailboards and kayaks and an on-site Budget rental car office add to the resort's attractions.

As the late afternoon sky turned a rosy orange with the setting sun, I reflected on the wonderful day spent on the hotel's beach and couldn't help thinking how great an entire week would be. David's words still echoed in my mind: "People caring about people." On my way out, I stopped to say good-bye to Betty, Johanna and MaryMae, who were still relaxing at their little table. Proudly, they showed me some underwater lights they'd rented from the dive shop.

"We've never gone snorkeling at night before but we saw some people in the water last night just around the pier. They said the orange corals were really fantastic, so we're going to try it ourselves."

As I was walking away, I overheard young MaryMae ask her mom if

she thought the Spotted Drum would be here next year. Johanna replied, "I guess we'll just have to come back and see."

For more information or to make reservations at the Sunset Beach Hotel, contact Caradonna Caribbean tours toll free in the U.S. or Canada at (800) 328-2288, or fax (407) 862-6000. Be sure to ask about the attractively priced Bon-anza '97 package for snorkelers. 

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provide excellent snorkeling experiences as well. The changes among different parts of the coral reef occur gradually as the coastline and other conditions change.

A team of expert snorkelers and underwater photographers designed the Bonaire Guided Snorkeling Program in conjunction with the Bonaire Marine Park and local operators. The first phase of the project involved swimming the entire western coastline (and around the small island of Klein Bonaire) to determine which areas offered the very best snorkeling. The map shows you the 12 areas that were selected, based on the different types of coral terraces and attractions. It should be noted that the entire coastline of Bonaire contains many other snorkel/dive sites; these 12 were selected to represent distinct experiences. Sites immediately adjacent to those on the map will provide

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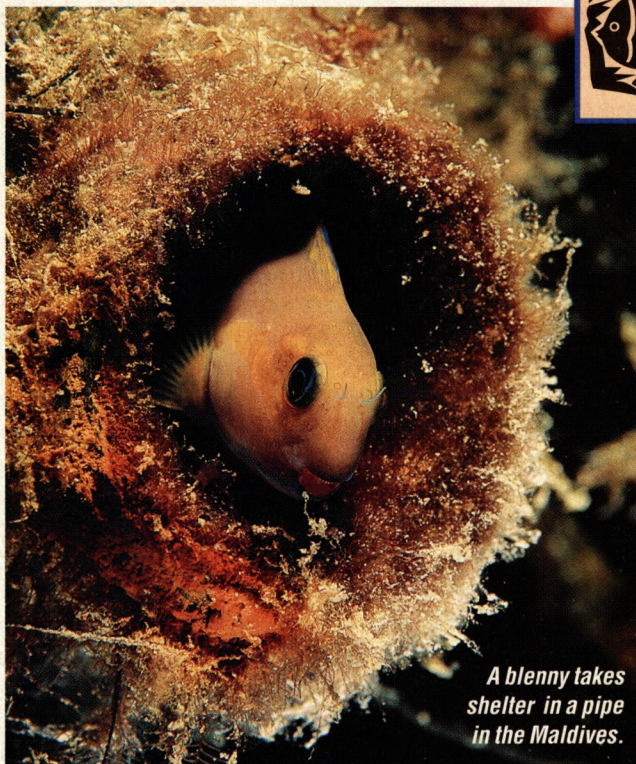
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A blenny takes shelter in a pipe in the Maldives.



Social Featherdusters (Bispira brunnea) are so named because they are found in clusters.

Take a Peek at the Reef's Condo Critters

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAMMY PELUSO

From the surface it's easy to see the big picture—the structure of the reef, the procession of neon-colored fish, the magnificent gardens of coral. When you freedive, you get to peek inside the inner sanctum where fish and critters sleep and hide. Within the reef's rocky maze of nooks, crannies and crevices lurk fish of assorted shapes and sizes and a legion of invertebrates such as shrimp, crabs, lobster and octopuses. Many create permanent homes they fiercely protect and guard; others boldly cruise the reef, ducking into shadowy corners when in need of temporary protection or respite.

Surprisingly, the housing situation on the reef is quite similar to our own: There are furnished apartments, fixer-uppers, trailers, motels and custom built homes. Regardless, they all provide the basic requirements: shelter, protection and proximity to food.

Many critters, such as moray eels, move into the reef as is; they just claim a crevice for their own. They don't do much redecorating but are particular about the architecture; usually choosing a roomy dwelling that has both a front and back door. During the daytime morays often stay close to home—peering from their lairs, waiting for an easy

meal. At night morays roam the reef under cover of darkness; they don't see well and feed using their astute sense of smell. Most morays eat crustaceans; a few, such as the West Indian Spotted Moray (*Gymnothorax moringa*), eat small fish as well. Eels can be dangerous if provoked but are typically mellow and, in many cases, downright friendly. They are, however, extremely protective of their homes so it's best to stay out unless invited.

The pipes on sunken airplanes and ships are prime real estate U/W; on new wrecks the tubes are always the first to be chosen. Pipes are popular with small fish such as gobies and blennies as well as morays—they are the perfect fortress. Eventually, the pipes become covered with sponges, algae and coral, creating an ideal frame for photo subjects; close-up kits and macro lenses are perfect. When there are several eels living in proximity to each other, the

eels will often switch dens or live together in the same hole.

Some shrimp, crabs and blennies are architects; they build burrows in the sand and sculpt niches in rocky crevices filled with substrate suitable for excavation, such as sand or coral rubble. One of the most creative builders is the mantis shrimp—a bizarre creature that

Hermit crabs are well protected by their mobile homes.



has huge psychedelic stalked eyes, a fierce grin and a punch powerful enough to break a camera lens. They are usually found in niches along rocky bottoms or in deep sand burrows. Mantis shrimp are beautiful, dangerous and an enigma to macro photographers. Knowing where and how they live makes it a bit easier, but they are quite skittish. You need to watch from a distance till they peek out of their burrows, then sneak up on them.

Tubeworms (members of the Serpulidae family), fanworms and featherdusters (members of the Sabellidae family), come in a feathery assortment of shapes, colors and sizes—some look like miniature Christmas trees, others have frilly, fan-like layers. For protection, these worms build sturdy tubes, using lime, mucus and sand. The worms can fold their bodies into the tube like an umbrella when necessary. The worms are filter feeders and use their pretty plumes to cap-

ture plankton. They typically build their tube castles on reefs where there are strong currents. Although these colorful worms exist individually, they are often seen living in huge colonies, covering coral boulders with a lush living carpet of tiny, flower-like animals. When living together the worms are all tuned to the same frequency—if you frighten one, you scare them all. If you move too fast around a colony of tubeworms, they vanish in a colorful flash. Despite their fragile appearance, they are quite sturdy and make excellent subjects for macro photography.

Hermit crabs are vagabonds; they use empty shells for homes. They are scavengers and scour the ocean floor and reef in search of food, taking their homes with them. They are most active at night and are often seen munching in the moonlight. Hermit crabs have no hard cuticle to protect their soft abdomen and would, without the protection of a

shell, be devoured easily. Some species of hermit crabs live in sheltered burrows. Hermit crabs can't move very fast so they use their shells like armor, when threatened they quickly pull inside and block the door with their largest claw. The shell keeps the hermit crab safe from most predators with some exceptions. Octopus can easily penetrate the shells with their powerful beaks; snails can inject a deadly poison; and starfish will eventually win out with patience and persistence. As they grow, hermit crabs will change homes and move into larger shells. If homes are scarce, hermit crabs have been known to forcibly evict another hermit crab.

The delicate Arrowcrab has a totally different approach. Generally, it hides during the day, often in or near the protective arms of an anemone or crinoid; at night, the Arrowcrab will often leave its sheltered den in search of food. They use their long spindly legs to scuttle across the reef top, retreating into corners when necessary. At night, Arrowcrabs are often found perched atop a coral or sponge, picking morsels from the passing current.

Getting to know the reef takes time and patience, it's best to start shallow and gradually go deeper as your skills improve. Take the time, it's a world worth knowing. 

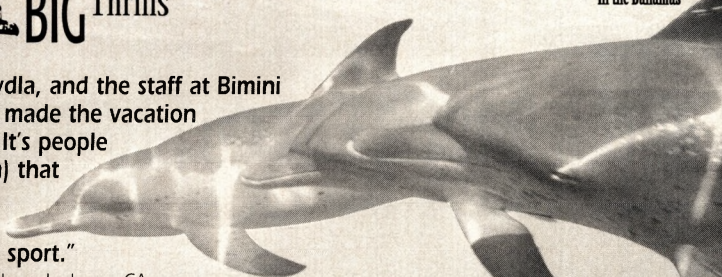
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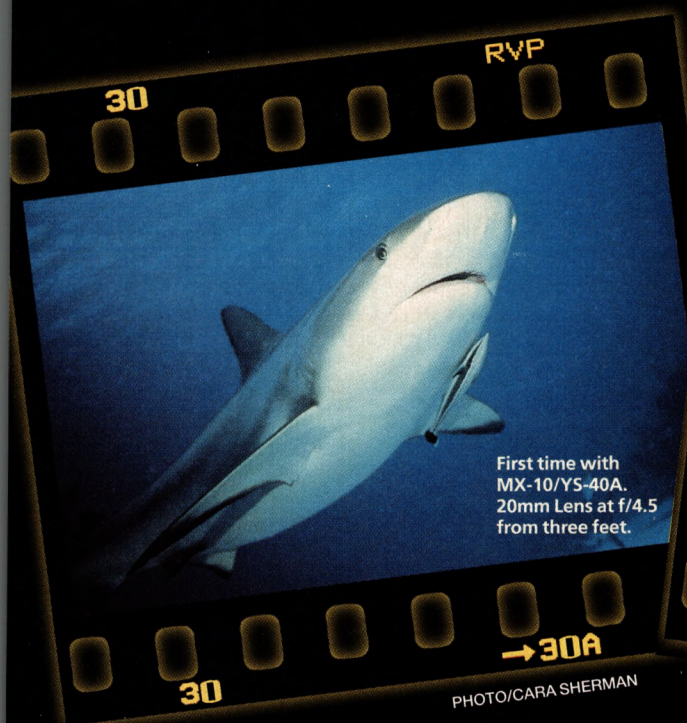
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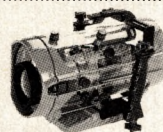
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DIVING MEDICINE

Squeeze

BY FRED BOVE, M.D., PH.D.

Perhaps the most troublesome part of diving is the continuous need to avoid the consequences of pressure changes associated with depth. The physical effects of pressure are described by Boyle's Law, which defines the relation between pressure and volume. Boyle's Law states that the product of absolute pressure and volume of a gas is constant: $P \cdot V = \text{Constant}$. If air pressure in body spaces cannot equilibrate with ambient pressure on descent, the forces produced will reduce the volume by squeezing surrounding tissues into the space. On ascent, air in the lungs must be allowed to vent or overinflation will occur. Tissue injury caused by Boyle's Law effects is called barotrauma or squeeze. The accompanying table shows the changes a five liter volume undergoes as it is subjected to a dive of 100 feet. The greatest volume change is in the first 10

VOLUME/DEPTH

This table shows the change in volume and the percent change in volume for a five liter initial lung volume.

Initial Depth (feet)	Volume Change (percent)	Volume (liters)
0	23.26	5.00
10	14.48	3.84
20	9.88	3.11
30	7.18	2.62
40	5.45	2.26
50	4.28	1.99
60	3.45	1.77
70	2.84	1.60
80	2.37	1.46
90	2.02	1.34
100	1.74	1.24

feet. Because the greatest volume change is at the shallowest depth, the most common time for squeeze to occur is during the initial portion of the descent or, in the case of lung barotrauma, during the final portion of the ascent.

EAR SQUEEZE

Ear squeeze is the most common diving related injury. When the Eustachian tubes do not open to allow pressure to equalize across the eardrum, the pressure difference stretches the drum and causes injury. Enough force can tear or rupture the eardrum. The Eustachian tubes can be blocked by mucous or swelling owing to colds or allergies. Middle ear squeeze causes swelling of the lining of the middle ear and fluid ac-

cumulation. Often the fluid will not clear until the swelling has subsided and normal Eustachian tube function returns. This frequently requires five or six days and, occasionally, one to two weeks.

Inner ear barotrauma or round window rupture damages the hearing and balance mechanisms. Inner ear barotrauma during descent is caused by forceful efforts to equalize the middle ear. If the ear does not clear, the large pressure difference can lead to rupture of membranes that seal the inner ear fluid from the middle ear. Round window rupture is accompanied by vertigo, hearing loss, nausea, vomiting, noise in the ear and, sometimes, a feeling of weakness. If a round window rupture is suspected, removal of the diver from the water, bed rest, head elevation and medical consultation should be sought. Divers should not be recompressed for treatment of round window rupture, as this will often aggravate the fluid leak. Surgery may be needed to repair the damage.

Reverse squeeze, where the eardrum bulges outward, can occur during descent when a tight fitting hood blocks the external ear canal. The increasing middle ear pressure will not be balanced by external pressure because of the blocked canal and pressure inside the middle ear will exceed the pressure in the occluded canal.

FACE SQUEEZE

Air in the space between the mask and the face also obeys Boyle's Law. If air is not added to the space during descent, it will be reduced as ambient pressure increases until the tissues of the face and eyes are forced into the collapsing mask. Treatment for mask squeeze is directed toward symptoms. If the eyes are painful, local analgesic drops can be used and some physicians will recommend antibiotic drops to avoid infection in the injured tissue. To prevent mask squeeze, equalize the mask during descent.

SINUS SQUEEZE

If the air passage into a sinus is blocked, the air trapped within will be forced to decrease in volume as pressure increases. The sinuses are air filled chambers within the skull. Although the bony structure will not collapse under the pressure changes, the lower pressure in the blocked sinus will draw blood into it.

Blood vessels will engorge and leak. The squeeze results in a blood-filled sinus, which will drain during ascent when the air in the sinus expands. A bloody nose and a sinus headache after diving usually accompany a sinus squeeze.

TOOTH SQUEEZE

Air spaces inside the teeth owing to decay, associated with a filling or an abscess, change volume as pressure changes during diving. An air pocket under a filling may expand on ascent and push the filling out of the tooth, while an air pocket may be distorted during descent and cause a severe toothache. If you get a toothache during ascent, there is little you can do but continue your ascent. Pain medication will help on the surface.

LUNG SQUEEZE

Although it is theoretically possible to get a lung squeeze by descending while breath-holding to depths greater than about 150 feet, the freediving record is nearly 300 feet. When the lungs are emptied at the end of exhalation, about 20 percent of the total lung volume remains. One would expect that a depth of five atmospheres absolute (132 feet) would be the limits of lung volume compression during a breath-hold descent. Research has shown that blood shifting into the blood vessels of the lung can displace more volume and allow a diver to withstand a greater volume reduction than the theoretical 5:1 ratio allows. The extreme rarity of this condition indicates it is not a problem with diving.

STOMACH SQUEEZE

Air in the stomach at the time of ascent from a dive will expand according to Boyle's Law. Some divers swallow air, which will accumulate in the stomach during a dive. A regulator providing excess pressure at the mouthpiece can force air into the stomach. Ascent with air in the stomach will produce severe abdominal cramps. Further ascent may cause stomach rupture. Prevention is the best management of this problem. Be sure your regulator is functioning properly and avoid swallowing air while diving. If cramps do occur during ascent, stop and try to belch to remove the air from the stomach.

SUIT SQUEEZE

Drysuit users may notice painful red streaks on their skin after diving. These are caused by suit folds lying against the skin during descent. Folds containing air are compressed against the skin, the skin is forced into the folds and local injury occurs. Always leave enough residual air in a drysuit so it is not tight against the skin. Wearing a light garment (thermal underwear) under the suit will prevent the suit from sealing tightly against the skin.

All divers will experience the effects of squeeze. Careful attention to equilibration of air spaces during descent and ascent, good dental hygiene, avoiding air swallowing, maintaining equipment and attending to the health of your nose, throat and sinuses are measures that will help avoid injury owing to squeeze or barotrauma. 🐡

Dive Notes

SHARM EL SHEIK EMERGENCY AND TRAUMA CENTER: A new Emergency

and Trauma Center in the well-known Red Sea diving resort area of Sharm el Sheik has recently been opened. The hospital, the first of its kind in southern Sinai, specializes in diving medicine and includes a physical therapy clinic and a pulmonary therapy clinic. Sharm el Sheik Emergency and Trauma Center is close to many hotels and the downtown area.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Dr. A.G. Hamada, 8841 Garden Grove Boulevard, Garden Grove, CA 92844 or call (714) 537-6780, fax (714) 537-6782. 🐡

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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL HARRIGAN



Remember the Jimmy Buffett lyric, "Fins to left, fins to the right and you're the only bait in town?" That line kept running through my head as the boat cut through the blue Bahamas water on the way to **Shark Rodeo**, where a slew of sharks was already gathering. When I stepped off the dive platform, I discovered there were fins to the left, right, up and down. This part of the ocean was filled, wall to wall and floor to ceiling, with sharks! The Shark Rodeo usually attracts about 100 Blacktip and Caribbean Reef Sharks and we had drawn a standing room only crowd. It's hard to count so many constantly moving sharks but everyone

agreed the number was closer to 120. What a fantastic sight!

The prospect of diving with sharks is something that crosses everyone's mind when they take up the sport. Some of us look forward to seeing sharks with perhaps the tiniest bit of trepidation; others of us hope mostly to avoid them. Whatever your own feelings, the Walker's Cay Shark Rodeo dive is a unique treat. If you want to see sharks, you won't get a chance like this anywhere else in the world. Where else could you safely dive with upward of 100 sharks in an area about the size of a basketball court? If the thought of diving with sharks makes you squeamish, Shark Rodeo will probably allay your fears. No guests have ever been injured on these dives and everyone's apprehension evaporates quickly when they see the sharks are not interested in them as a food source.

Shark Rodeo was designed to prevent the sharks from associating the bait with the divers. The bait in this case is a frozen barrelful of fishheads referred to, naturally, as the "chumsicle." This chilly shark treat is suspended about ten feet off the sandy bottom and the sharks are free to munch on it without any human interaction. After the chumsicle is in place, only a handful of sharks actively investigate or feeds at any one time. The rest of the sharks swim leisurely around the

SDM TRAVEL AT A GLANCE

Walker's Cay is best known for:

- Chumsicle dives
- Great coral reefs
- Prolific fish life
- Tranquility

rodeo grounds, where the divers can take a close look at them.

Some fascinating facets of shark behavior show up at Shark Rodeo. For instance, have you ever seen a shark yawn? The sharks cruising the periphery do it occasionally. The motion resembles the lazy, powerful yawn of lions, starting near the shark's dorsal fin and rippling forward, ending with the mouth wide open and those incredible jaws and teeth extended. Gary Adkison, the Walker's Cay dive manager, says sharks yawn frequently and, when one shark yawns it can start a chain reaction, similar to the way one yawning person can set off a whole room full of yawns.

As the sharks swim by you can also see how their eyes resemble those of a cat and how their noses are covered with small pits containing ampullae of Lorenzini. This unique organ allows sharks to detect the minute electromagnetic pulses caused by the movements of their prey. Shark Rodeo is such a unique opportunity to view these magnificent creatures that several major universities and aquariums are conducting long term studies at Walker's Cay. Many of the sharks have been marked with digital tags that allow an electronic roll call to be taken for the studies.

WALKER'S CAY UNDERSEA ADVENTURES: I really enjoyed diving at Walker's

Cay and it wasn't just because the sharks were such a kick. The people there make diving fun. Manager Gary Adkison and assistant manager Barry Albury are one of the best teams in diving. Both have an infectious enthusiasm that gets everyone up right from the start. They both know Walker's Cay's under-

WALKER'S CAY DIVE BOATS

A Pro 42 jet drive boat, *Sea Vista*, has recently been added to the Walker's Cay fleet,



joining *Sea Below*, a Burpee 45, and *Sea View*, a Maine Coaster 35. All three boats are equipped with clean towels, marine heads, camera rinse barrels, dry storage areas and big, solid ladders. Don't expect to spend much time on the boats, though, because the dive sites are all within 10 to 20 minutes of the dock.

water life like no one else and excel at sharing it with you. Leroy "Snoopy" Cooper is an SSI instructor and also handles boats with casual expertise. Dive-masters Philip Russell and Tony Thomas make sure you have a good dive and seem to have eyes in the back of their heads when it comes to spotting problems before they happen. Elias Miller is a

divemaster in training.

Dive instruction is available from resort course through the PADI Instructor Development Course. Even the Instructor Evaluation is given right on the island. Gary is a qualified instructor for SSI, PADI, YMCA and IDEA, so, whatever your preference, you can find it at Walker's.

DIVING THE REEFS: The reefs at Walker's Cay are distinctly different from other coral reefs. The living reef grows on top of a fossil coral reef that created a huge limestone buttress over the thousands of years since the last ice age. Full of meandering crevices and caverns, these ancient structures provide many places where you can actually swim through the reef. Topping the fossil substrate is a veneer of living coral, with many beautiful colonies of both hard and soft corals. A Brain Coral formation nine feet in diameter sits on the edge of the reef at **Coral Gardens**, having begun its life there before the Declaration of Independence was signed. The surrounding reef is home to a resident Loggerhead Turtle, along with many groupers, Surgeonfish and jacks. **White Hole** is another great dive along a wall of coral. As you swim past the golden Elkhorn Coral near the surface, the reef opens up, with many entrances inviting exploration. Spotted Eagle Rays and solitary Blacktips cruise across the sandy



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WALKER'S CAY



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WALL TO WALL SHARKS!

sections between the coral ridges. Caribbean Reef Sharks are often seen resting motionless on the bottom at **Shark Alley** but you are also likely to see colorful Queen Triggerfish, Queen Angelfish, Yellowfin Groupers, Banded Butterflyfish and scores of other fish. Not far away, two ocean going tugboats called the **Dorothy H.** and the **Esther K.** have been sunk in about 100 feet of water and provide ghostly wreck dives.

WALKER'S CAY HOTEL AND MARINA

I suspect that everyone who spends a few days at Walker's Cay starts to feel as if they own the place. Although it is only 140 miles from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, Walker's Cay is the sort of isolated tropical island you might buy if you won the lottery. In fact, the island is



privately owned by Robert Alplanaip, who has turned it into a very appealing resort. Within its 100 acres, Walker's Cay has an airstrip, a 62 room hotel, three villas, a guesthouse and a 75 slip marina.

The island can be walked from one end to the other in less than half an hour but most people like to linger on the long ribbon of beach. It is so wonderfully quiet you can hear the rustle of the palms and delicate splash of seabirds preening themselves in the shallow water. If you tire of the white sand, there are two pools, one salt and one fresh, and a spa.

Lunch is served in the Lobster Trap, a casual restaurant overlooking the marina. Breakfast and dinner are taken in the Conch Pearl Restaurant, where the elegant dining room looks out across the reefs to the north. Fresh seafood is the specialty and the service is excellent.

The whole area is a living marine treasure and Adkison has been campaigning for several years for park designation, backed by the support of residents and local fishermen. Hopefully the Walker's Cay reefs will soon be given the protection of official national park status by The Bahamas government.

TRAVEL INFORMATION: Getting to Walker's is easy and fun. Service is provided by Pan Am Air Bridge, which operates a fleet of twin turbine amphibious airplanes from the north side of the Ft. Lauderdale International Airport. The Pan Am mini terminal is the perfect antidote

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SKIN DIVER JUNE 1997 **73**

BELIZE AGGRESSOR III

(Continued from Page 28)

fer the standard 110 volt electrical current that Americans are used to and have a quality and style that make U.S. visitors feel comfortable and at home.

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Meals are served in the dining area, there is a separate entertainment salon. Slides can be viewed here on built-in light boxes (E-6 processing is available). Outdoors, there's a large sundeck and hottub.

Meals are served in the salon and are something special indeed. There's an early morning snack just before the first dive of the day. Then, there's a hot, full

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<i>Turks & Caicos Aggressor</i>	June 14 to 21
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August 9 to 16

Fiji Aggressor

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1997 CLAY WISEMAN PHOTO COURSES

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Belize Aggressor III

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breakfast, a hot lunch, a late afternoon snack and a sumptuous dinner. Choices are healthy and plentiful, with lots of fresh vegetables, pastas, chicken and fish, cooked in a combination of styles, including American, European and local Creole.

As a diving support vehicle, the *Belize Aggressor III* is laid out perfectly. Each diver has a personal, below seat storage space for gear and wetsuit drying is just above. The crew fills—with air or EANx (nitrox), dependent upon the individual diver's preference and qualifications—and maintains scuba systems to be ready at anytime. Divers can simply slip into their gear, step off the twin ladder dive platform and be in the water in moments. Camera prep tables are centrally located near dive gear and a large camera/rinse bin sits at the top of the dive platform.

If you're Atlantis 1 rebreather certified, you'll be please to hear the *Belize Aggressor III* has units for rental. You can also take a course and learn how to use them.

Best of all is the diving itself. *Aggressor III*'s crew has years of experience diving the complex system of cayes and reeflines that run along Belize's long coastline and the ship's charter schedule (Saturday to Saturday), provides five and a half days of unlimited diving, with night dives available almost every evening.



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Most diving is done off Lighthouse Reef, with other dives near the **Turneffe Islands** and **Glover's Reef**.

The most popular dive in the Turneffe Islands is a wall known as **The Elbow**. It starts in about 60 feet of water and, because it is on the extreme southern tip of the reef, where there are often currents, life is profuse. On the craggy wall are sponges and seafans that feed in the moving water. Fish are everywhere, with schools of grunts, spadefish, snappers and jacks usually seen.

On **Lighthouse Reef**, perhaps Belize's favorite dive area, there are many different sites, some 33 different ones on the *Aggressor's* list. One of the best is **Half Moon Caye Wall**, just a couple hundred yards off the Half Moon Caye bird sanctuary. The wall drops off in only 45 feet of water and is marked with many canyons, overhangs and prominences. On the landward side is a pure white sand flat that becomes a huge eel grass bed. Schools of Horse-eye Jacks congregate along the wall face and Southern Stingrays lie in the sand. In the grass bed are many Hog Snappers and French Angels. Eagle Rays cruise the entire area.

In front of the pier at Half Moon Caye is an interesting snorkel site. In a coral, sand and grass covered area, in only a few feet of water, large numbers of Nurse Sharks and Southern Stingrays congregate.

AGGRESSOR FLEET VESSELS				
Vessel	Length	No. of Divers	Cruise Length	Price*
Bay Islands Aggressor III Honduras	110'	18	6 days	\$1,195
Belize Aggressor III Belize	110'	18	6 days	\$1,595
Cayman Aggressor III Cayman Islands	110'	18	6 days	\$1,495
Fiji Aggressor** Fiji	106'	16	6 days	\$2,095
Galapagos Aggressors III Ecuador	80'	14	6 to 10 days (6 days)	\$2,345
Kona Aggressor II Hawaii	80'	10	6 days	\$1,795
Okeanos Aggressor Costa Rica	120'	21	10 & 11 days	\$2,495/ \$2,795
Palau Aggressor II Palau	106'	16	6 days	\$2,095
Sere-Ni-Wai Fiji	101'	10	6 days	\$2,095
Truk Aggressor II Truk Lagoon	110'	14	6 days	\$2,095
Turks & Caicos Aggressor Turks & Caicos	100'	16	6 days	\$1,495

*Special cruises, such as those with Jean-Michel Cousteau, Stan Waterman or Jim Church, cost more but there are also cruises offered at discount rates—ask when you book! **In operation starting July 1, 1997.

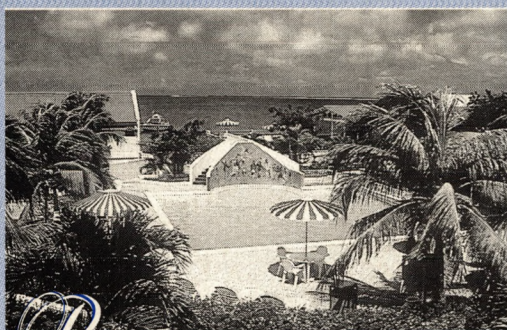
Perhaps the area's most fascinating dive is at the nearby **Blue Hole**. On the top of the reef flat, this huge hole sinks straight down hundreds of feet. On a

guided deep dive, divers drop down the sides past 100 feet. Along the walls, huge stalactites hang down in the soft, blue light.

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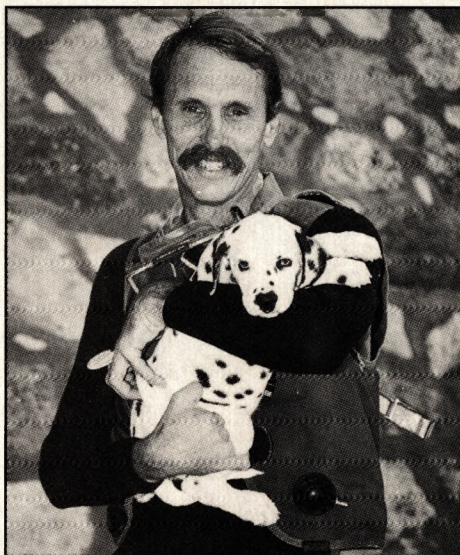
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SOUTHPOINT DIVERS

(Continued from Page 53)

cluding a completely dry forward cabin, carpeting, overhead storage and more. The jet drive build, without exposed props, not only provides diver safety but also enhances access and maneuverability in shallow waters. The *Manta* recently joined *Southpoint Diver III*, a Pro 42 already in service in Southpoint's fleet. Both boats feature SECURUS hang kits and an all instructor crew.

As the island's only PADI Five Star IDC Center, Southpoint has continually focused on delivering the best of Key West to its guests. This includes not only daily reef and wreck trips, instruction, certification and retail sales through the center's two Duval Street locations but also some unique side orders to enhance the Key West menu. The eco-snorkel tour features two hours of water time at two different locations, with an orientation highlighting the reefs and ecosystem and a fish ID chart for reference while touring. Snorkel equipment is included in the cost. To complement reef tours, kayak treks among the mangrove stands provide an acquaintance with estuary life, including exotic waterbirds, tiny crustaceans and larger animals, such as turtles and rays.

Personalizing vacation packages is Southpoint's specialty, with accommodations arranged anywhere on the island. Duval Gardens, a short walk from the shop, is typical of the restored Victorian homes now serving as fine bed and breakfast inns. Upscale hotels include the Hyatt Key West Resort and Marina (where Southpoint's fleet is docked), historic Casa Marina or the Marriott's oceanfront resort, where guests of Duval Gardens may enjoy membership privileges.

Value is a unique feature of Southpoint's service, with divers earning American Airlines frequent flyer miles—500 for each three dives and 1,000 for each five dives. Southpoint also includes a super coupon book with each booking, offering substantial savings on local attractions and eateries. But along with all of this value you'll find a highly professional operation and consistent, quality service, a winning combination that led to this shop being chosen the best in the city.

Southpoint delivers Key West in style, with value, safety, comfort and a reliable network of professionals to plan your vacation from beginning to end. So add a lot of variety and a little whimsy to your next dive vacation with Key West's unique adventure, excitement and natural beauty. Contact Southpoint Divers for more information at (800) 891-DIVE, (305) 292-9778 or visit them in Key West at 714 and/or 535 Duval Street. 

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STINGRAY CITY

(Continued from Page 20)

First time visitors may find the spectacle bewildering and downright chaotic but, in actuality, it is really a lot of fun. Even after countless dives with these stingrays, I still find them amazing. They are a blast to photograph and can be astonishingly gentle, allowing themselves to be touched and even supported by outstretched arms. The feel of their soft underbellies is strikingly similar to velvet.

Since the discovery of Stingray City ten years ago, the rays have forever changed in our perception. Once we thought of them as fearsome beasts, now we see them as graceful, benign creatures. While divers most often visit Stingray City, at nearby **Sandbar** snorkelers have the same opportunities for safe, full contact encounters in water as shallow as three feet.

Seven days a week, 365 days a year, the extraordinary ritual of diver meets ray happens like clockwork. Often, before the first person can enter the crystalline water, the rays have gathered in large numbers below the boat's swim platform. Back in 1987, when divemasters first began feeding the rays, there were between 10 and 14. Now there are more than eight dozen.

This "petting zoo free-for-all" is an intriguing phenomenon. It is not the natural behavior of a wild ray, let alone several dozen of them. Most stingrays are wary solitary hunters, spending their time searching for food on the ocean floor and trying not to become a meal themselves. The rays in North Sound move about in large aggregations, seeking handouts from any visitor willing to enter the water.

The reason for this behavior is no mystery. For more than five decades, local fishermen have anchored in the North Sound's protected waters at the end of the day to clean their catch. The rays discovered the discarded scraps of fish and, through a form of classical conditioning, learned that following the vessels would provide an easy feast.

In the early days of diving North Wall, the first deep dive was followed by a surface interval at this same sheltered area. Using this time to snorkel, Pat Kenney and Jay Ireland of Bob Soto's Diving, Ltd., noticed the rays' attraction to their boat. They became intrigued by the possibilities of interacting with the rays and began experimenting in the early part 1986. According to Pat, "Nobody knew much about the behavior of these things, so we really didn't know what to expect."

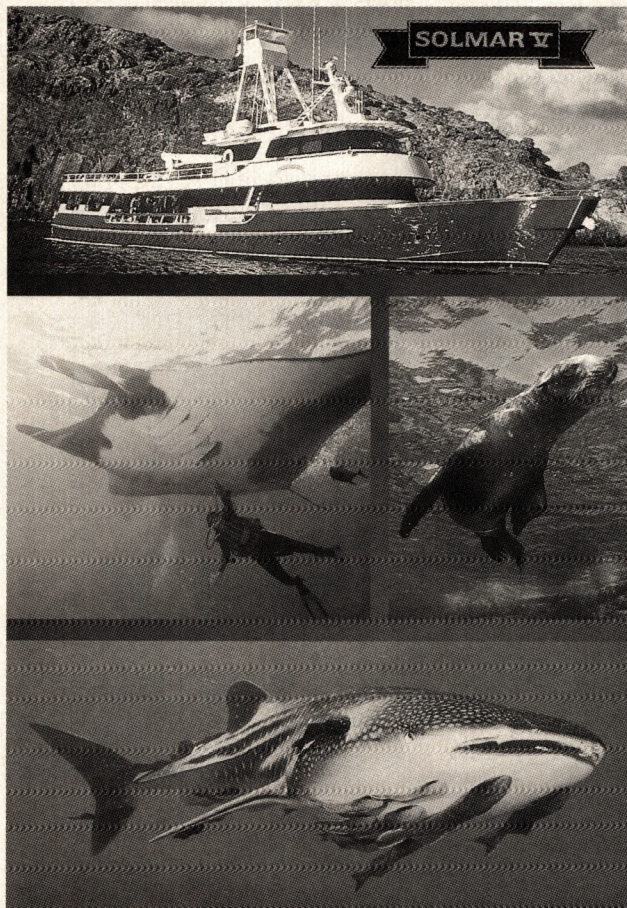
Because of the serrated, razor sharp

spine (sometimes up to six inches long) near the base of the whip-like tail, the stingray was considered a creature to avoid. But, to Pat and Jay's surprise, they found these rays could be handled and, more amazingly, actually handled.

Until the summer of 1987, still unsure of the rays' behavior, only Pat and Jay did the feeding. Soon word began to spread. More and more divers tried feeding the friendly stingrays.

Over the years, the rays of both Stingray City and Sandbar have become, perhaps, the single most celebrated and filmed underwater site on the globe; appearing in virtually every sport diving magazine in the U.S., Europe and Japan. The phenomenon has even been a cover story for *National Geographic* (January 1989), with a segment appearing on its TV series *Geographic Explorer*. To say the least, the rays have rubbed fin tips with the most comprehensive list of famous U/W cinematographers and photographers in the diving industry—Stan Waterman, Jack McKenney, Marty Snyderman, Howard Hall, David Doubilet, Stephen Frink, Rick Frehsee and more.

Of course, underwater photographers/cinematographers are not the only ones who come here. Watersport operations of all types make daily feeding sessions with the rays an integral part of their service. In 1996, more than one-half mil-



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lion divers and snorkelers visited the rays. That adds up to an average of more than 1,000 people a day!

Stingrays eat a variety of mollusks, crustaceans and, on occasion, small fish. Their eyes are on top of their heads; their mouths and nostrils are underneath. Because of this, a ray never actually sees what it eats. It locates its prey by means of a finely tuned sense of smell and touch and a set of receptors capable of detecting the faint electro-magnetic field emitted by all living creatures. Once the stingray has detected its target, it sucks it into its mouth and crushes it with a pair of powerful grinding plates. Speaking from experience, getting a finger caught in a stingray's mouth is a bit like having your fingers caught in a door. More common is a stingray hickey—expect some good natured ribbing from your dive buddies.

Some worry that this popular encounter between human and ray will inadvertently damage the rays' natural ability to forage for themselves. Take heart; according to most biologists, rays are opportunistic feeders. As long as the food is there they will stay; should the food start to disappear they will simply move on to other grounds.

GETTING TO GRAND CAYMAN

Traveling to Grand Cayman couldn't be any easier. Flying from Miami, via the Cayman Island's flag carrier, Cayman Airways,



takes little more than an hour. The airline also offers direct flights from Houston, Orlando, Tampa and Atlanta.

If you intend to visit the rays of Stingray City or Sandbar, remember, we are visitors in their realm; handle them gently and treat them with respect. It is seldom the marine world offers an intimate experience of this sort, where diver and sea creature can make contact without fear of harm or retribution.

Happy birthday, Stingray City, and many, many more!

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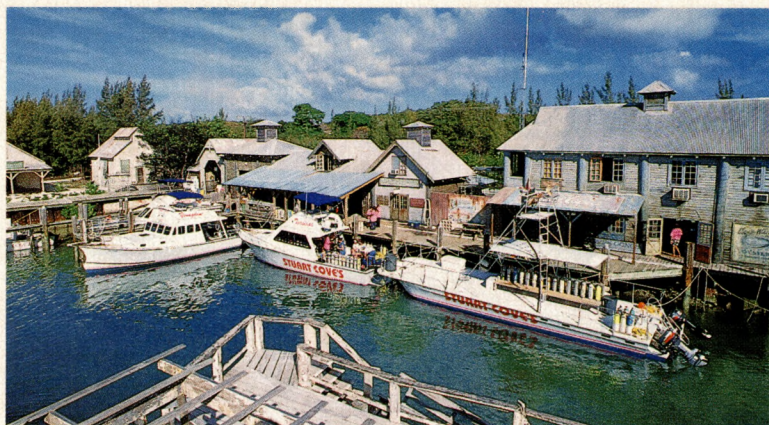
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Above: Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean. The property was transformed into an old fishing village for the movie, *Flipper*. Many of the movie's structures remain. Right: South Ocean Golf and Beach Resort pool area. Below: Stuart and Michelle Cove amid a sea of swirling sharks.



Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean

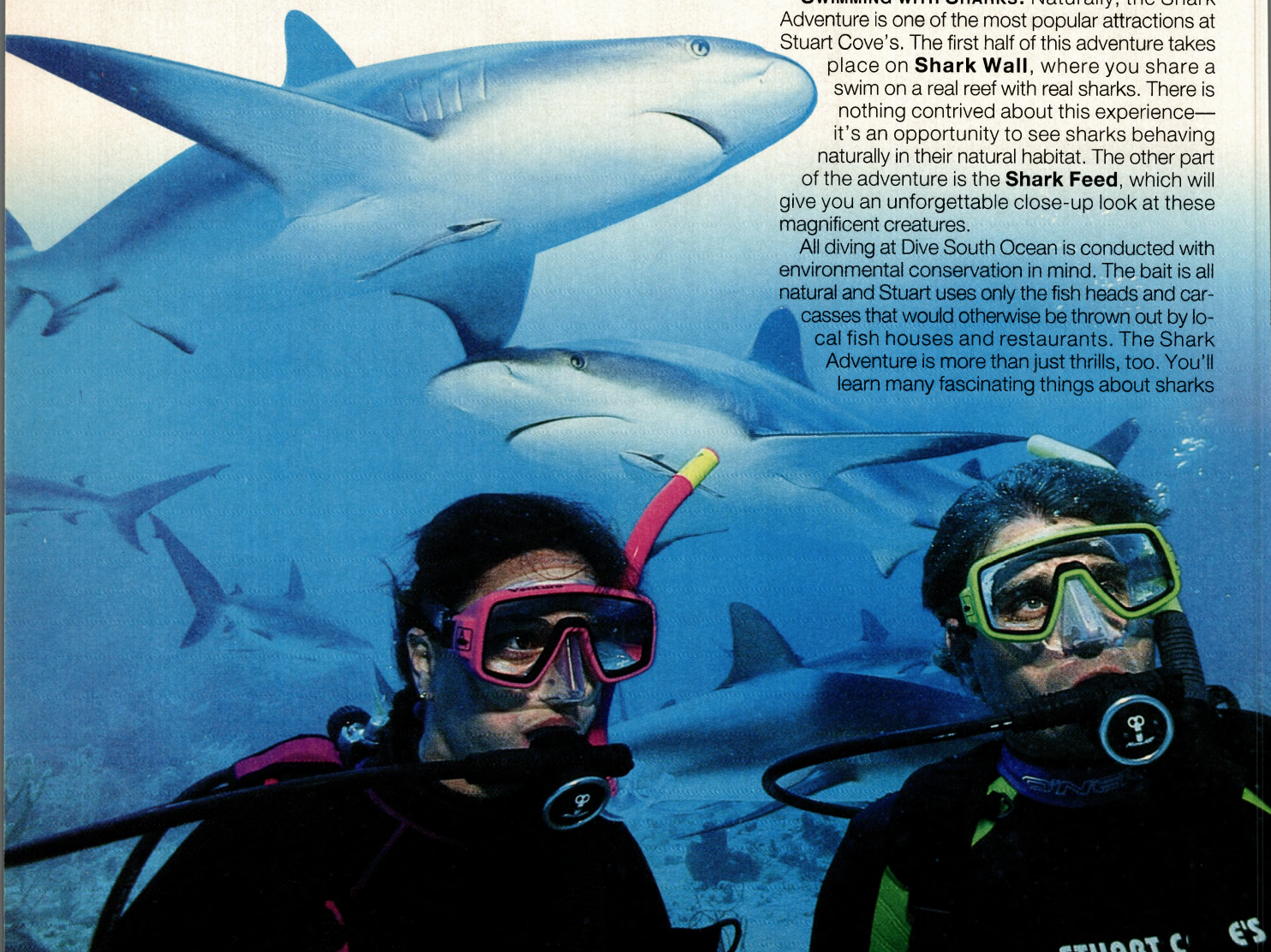
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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

Stuart and Michelle Cove's motto should be "Extreme Adventure, Extremely Easy." They make it easy for divers to have fun with the latest in high tech gear. At Dive South Ocean, you can choose your own adventure. Ever wished you could zoom effortlessly through the water as graceful as a dolphin—a living coral wall on one side and the deep blue ocean on the other? How about gliding silently along a wreck using a sophisticated semi-closed circuit rebreather? Have you wanted to expand your photography skills with an ultra wide angle lens? These adventures and many more await you at Dive South Ocean in Nassau.

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS: Naturally, the Shark Adventure is one of the most popular attractions at Stuart Cove's. The first half of this adventure takes place on **Shark Wall**, where you share a swim on a real reef with real sharks. There is nothing contrived about this experience—it's an opportunity to see sharks behaving naturally in their natural habitat. The other part of the adventure is the **Shark Feed**, which will give you an unforgettable close-up look at these magnificent creatures.

All diving at Dive South Ocean is conducted with environmental conservation in mind. The bait is all natural and Stuart uses only the fish heads and carcasses that would otherwise be thrown out by local fish houses and restaurants. The Shark Adventure is more than just thrills, too. You'll learn many fascinating things about sharks



and you can earn the PADI Shark Awareness certification. The course is easy, with the academics on video.

HIGH TECH SAMPLER: Dive South Ocean was the world's first resort to offer rebreathers and it has four Dräger Atlantis I semi-closed circuit rebreathers available. You can take the introductory course or the full rebreather certification course.

The use of nitrox in sport diving has been growing steadily as divers realize its benefits. Although nitrox can extend your no decompression bottom time if you dive according to a nitrox table or computer, many dive nitrox as an additional buffer against decompression sickness. Using nitrox with air tables or an air computer puts you farther from the potential danger of unwanted bubbles than using air. Of course there are some special considerations, such as the maximum operating depth for the percentage of oxygen contained in each mixture, so a certification course is required. At Dive South Ocean, you can get your certification at the beginning of your trip and enjoy the benefits of nitrox for the rest of your dives.

Another recent Stuart Cove innovation is Wall Flying with Apollo AV-1 underwater scooters. Sixteen of these diver propulsion vehicles are ready to take you on an underwater flight you won't forget. Most divers only need a couple of minutes to get comfortable with steering the scooter and then away they go in a streak of yellow.

DOZENS OF DIVE SITES: Sharks are by no means the only attraction at Dive South Ocean. There are many excellent dive sites, such as **Fanseas Purple**, a shallow reef thick with gently waving purple seafans, tall Star Coral heads and swarms of tropical fish. Round Star Coral heads are so numerous along the edge of the wall that local fishermen call another area **Pumpkin Patch**. The heads are easily visible 40 feet down and from there the reef drops off precipitously. The **Willaurie** is a 130 foot freighter that was sunk in 55 feet of water in 1989 and now sports a nice growth of corals and sponges. The **Bahama Mama** is another artificial reef, sunk in 1995 in only 40 feet on a sandy bottom. Sharks, Spadefish, jacks and schools of tiny Silversides have already made themselves at home on the **Bahama Mama**. The **Tunnel Wall** is another site you shouldn't miss. This is a relatively shallow reef with tunnels cut into the side. It's not the sort of thing you need special cave diving experience for but the meandering tunnels make an unusual dive. **Oasis** is a deep wall dive on the north side of the island that is great when the wind conditions are right. There is a tow-

(Continued on Page 103)

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Nature's Hideaway

Guanaja's Secluded Bayman Bay Club

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN AUBER

Background: A school of Blue Chromis flows over a lush reef. Top: Wooden walkways lead to the Bayman Bay dock area. Right: Cottages are nestled in the foliage along the shore awaiting modern day castaways.



Forty miles off the north coast of Honduras, between the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Honduras, lie Utila, Roatan and Guanaja—the Bay Islands of Honduras. Guanaja, the tallest, was originally called Pine Island by Columbus owing to the abundant Caribbean pines that thrive there. The population of Guanaja is approximately 10,000 people, the majority of whom live in Bonacca, a town built on stilts over the sea. While noted for its broad-leafed, lowland forests and

pine-clad mountain peaks, this region also hosts more than 200 species of orchids, many in Bayman Bay. And, an indigenous species of green parrot is also seen in abundance throughout the area.

Bayman Bay Club is owned by Thomas and Linda Fouke. It resembles a romantic *Swiss Family Robinson* hideaway. One of the reasons so many of the people coming to Bayman Bay are repeat guests is because you are treated like an old friend from the moment you arrive.

Bayman Bay Club is a unique resort, nestled on the hillside of a lush jungle arranged in such a way that the 18 cottages peek out through the palms and breadfruit trees toward the Caribbean Sea. The meticulous stone and wooden pathways lead you through the beautiful natural garden setting for which the north side of Guanaja is known. The centerpiece of the resort is a three story clubhouse. This is where you will enjoy three excellent meals each day, the highlight of which is the gourmet din-



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and willing to help you take

the first steps to becoming an

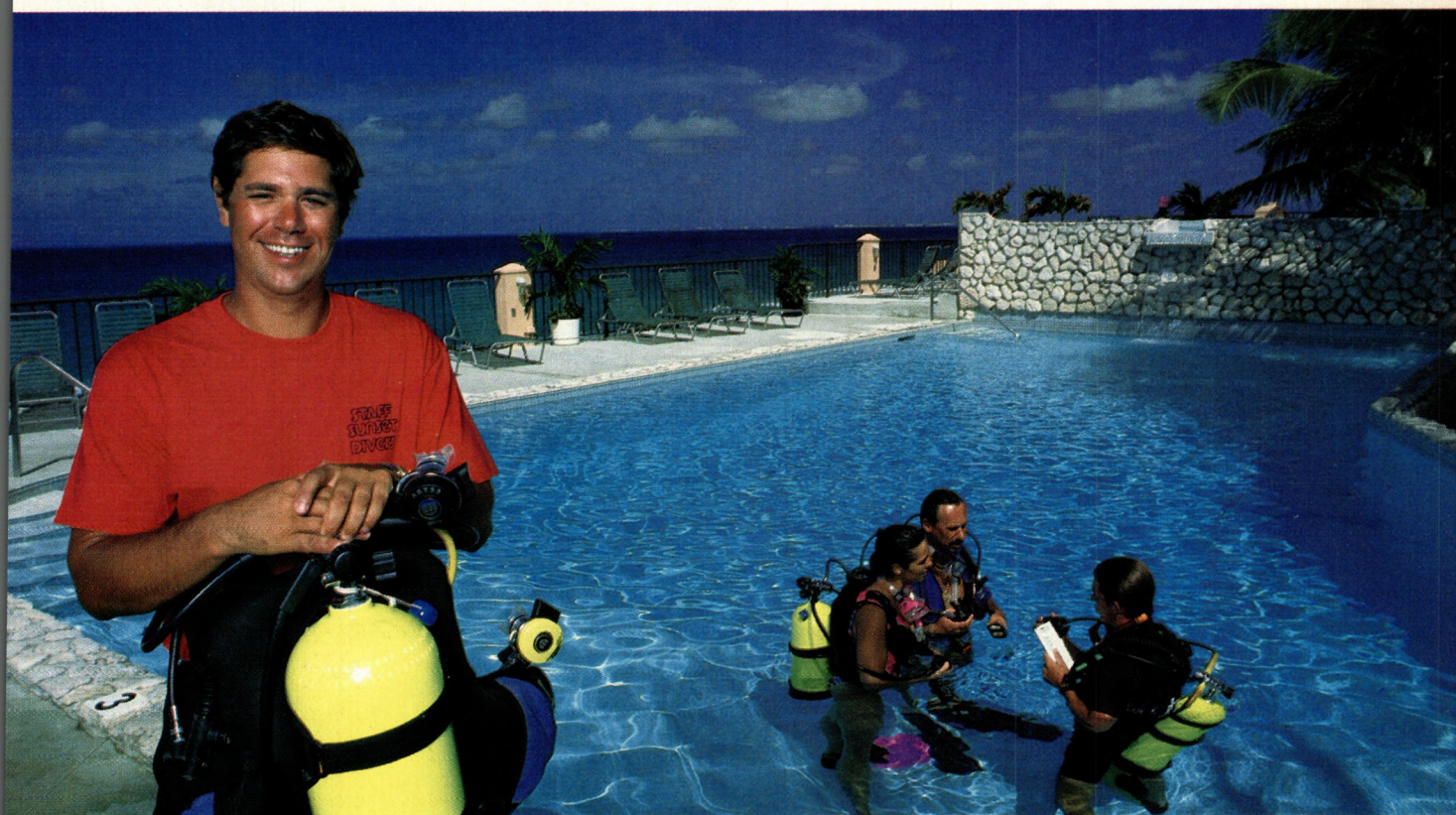
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the most remote walls of Grand Cayman. All of our guests,

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though, rave about the no-hassle, unlimited shore diving right off the hotel's back yard. And you might not believe it, but some folks say there's more to a vacation than just diving.

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ner served while you watch the sun settle softly into the sea. The dining room extends out onto a balcony should you choose to dine in the open air. Because of the unique design of the building, every table has a marvelous view. In the center of the dining room is a beautifully appointed bar with a nautical feel. Happy hour here is from 5:30 until 6:30 each evening. The large library and game room, on the next level up, is where you can sit back and relax while reading a book from the well stocked library, playing chess, backgammon or enjoying the full sized pool table in a friendly game of billiards. Head up to the next level, the observation deck, and you can visit Pepito, the friendly macaw, or observe large prehistoric looking iguanas sleeping under the canopy of the trees. It is on this observation deck you will find one of the best siesta hammocks on any island.

The Bay Islands are well known for their crystalline turquoise waters. Besides diving and snorkeling the Bayman Bay Club offers a host of activities. There are kayaks, free for guest use, for venturing out in search of your own private beach, or try the fitness trail that leads to the top of the hill, affording one of the best views of the Caribbean Sea found anywhere.



The Royal Sovereign loads for a short ride to one of the many reefs just offshore. BBC's experienced crew goes out of its way to accommodate every diver's needs or wishes.

The dive center and gift shop provide souvenirs and forgotten incidentals—there's no running out to the store here—as well as E-6 processing for photographers. On Thursdays, after your morning boat dives, your host will take you on a picnic at a secluded beach near Michael's Rock and afterward lead you to the largest waterfall on the island. Every Sunday evening Bayman Bay Club delights its guests with a beach barbecue, served buffetstyle and featuring many local foods as well as delicious chicken and ribs. Sitting at picnic tables surrounded by tiki torches with the Caribbean Sea lapping at your feet will convince you you're in paradise. The personal service provided at Bayman Bay Club is unsurpassed in the Caribbean.

All cottages are self-contained, with private baths and hot showers. A com-

(Continued on Page 161)

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MICRONESIA

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY AL HORNSBY

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Micronesia. The very word evokes images of the remote, the unspoiled; of lush, green islands sprinkled across the cobalt blue of the almost endless Pacific Ocean. More than 2,000 islands, in a 3,000,000 square mile area roughly between Hawaii, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea, make up this oceanic region named for its indigenous people, the seafaring Micronesians.

The many islands, whether low coral atolls or high volcanic is-

A full-page photograph showing a scuba diver in a purple wetsuit swimming through a narrow opening in a massive, colorful coral reef. The reef is covered in various types of coral, including large yellow and orange branching corals and green table corals. The water is crystal clear, and the scene is illuminated by natural light from above.

*Crystal clear water
highlights colorful walls
at Palau's Blue Hole.*

lands, are rich with life and some of the world's most arresting examples of nature's bounty and artistry. Rich soils, plentiful rainfall and brilliant, year-round tropical sunlight have combined to nurture a variety of different plant and animal species that compete for space and life in a dazzling natural display.

In the clear, shallow waters along the shorelines, life becomes even more prolific, seeming to explode in a wild mix of colors and shapes. There are simply more different marine species here than are found in most any other area on earth. More than 300 species of corals create vast gardens that are home to some of the world's most beautiful, exotic and unusual aquatic animals.

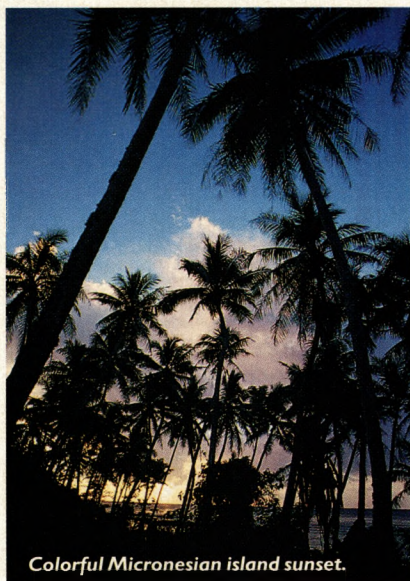
While descriptions of Micronesia could stop here, this incredible natural backdrop is also a fitting stage for a fascinating cultural and historical experience that links present and past, tradition and change. It's a region where grass skirts,

woven palm and shell oceanic maps and tribal chiefs are still commonplace. Here, the ravages of World War II still lie just beneath the surface of a jungle canopy, a quiet lagoon or the memory of a sun-weathered local villager. Yet, it's a place where U.S. currency, electricity and telephone systems tie it directly to the fast moving, modern world.

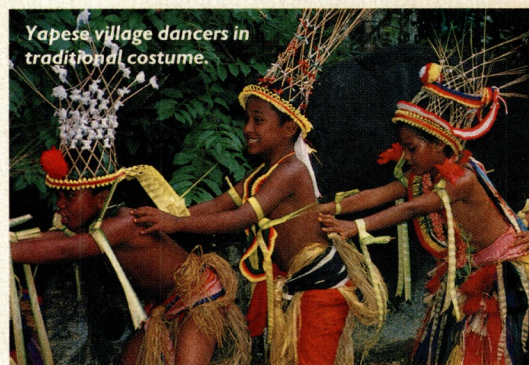
The challenge of writing about Micronesia is much the same as experiencing it—it is so vast, so diverse and so exquisitely interesting that it's almost impossible to know where to begin. At the same time, there's a real comfort in knowing it really doesn't matter—for any Micronesia experience has the power to intrigue and delight, to fascinate and enthrall.

THE MARIANAS CHAIN— GUAM, ROTA AND SAIPAN

Perhaps the most logical place to begin is where visitors first touch

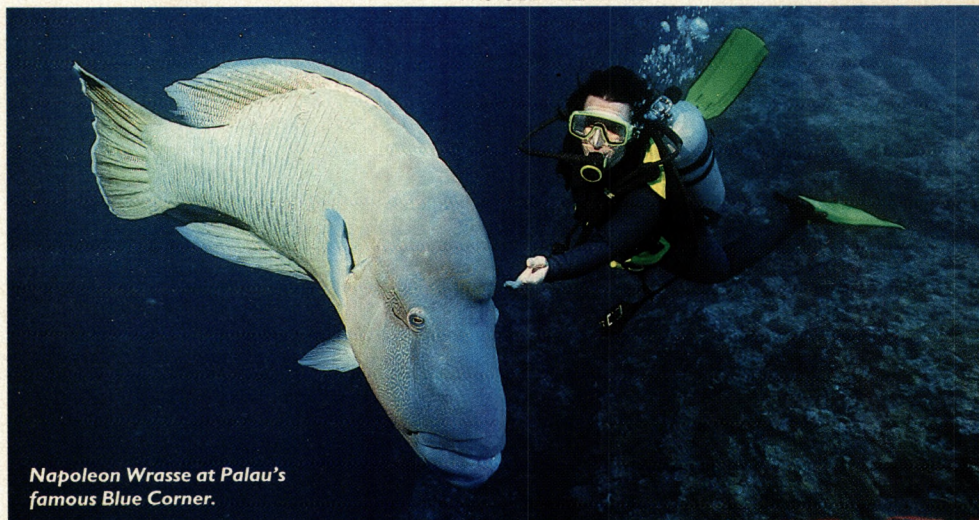


Colorful Micronesian island sunset.

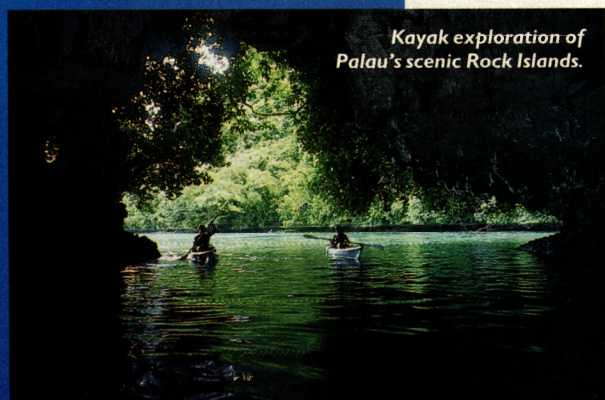


Yapese village dancers in traditional costume.

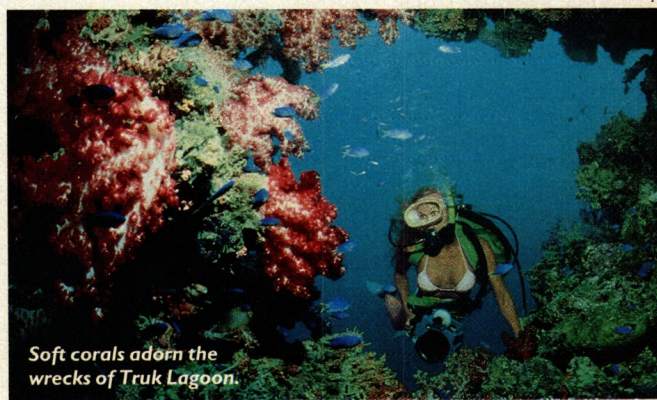
PHOTO BY THALIA FAKLIS



Napoleon Wrasse at Palau's famous Blue Corner.



Kayak exploration of Palau's scenic Rock Islands.



Soft corals adorn the wrecks of Truk Lagoon.

MICRONESIA

Micronesian soil—Guam. Some 32 miles long and four miles wide, Guam is a bright green, mountainous island that rises steeply from blue waters near the deepest part of the ocean, the Marianas Trench. Served by Continental Micronesia from Hawaii, just more than seven hours to the east, Guam is considered the gateway to the heart of Micronesia.

While Guam is often ignored by divers determined to reach the more famous island destinations, it has much to offer and should be included on Micronesia itineraries. There are very good reasons why it is one of Japan's most popular tourist destinations—among them are sightseeing, nightlife and the first taste of the region's great diving.

THE DIVING: Guam is known for extremely clear water, with the visibility commonly in excess of 200 feet in some outer reef areas. While exciting dives are found in many areas around the island, the most popular for visitors are along the middle of the western shoreline.

Guam's list of favorites include the **Blue Holes**, large irregularly shaped holes that bore down through the reef slope off Orote Point. Also along Orote Point, **The Crevice** is a deep slice in the hard coral bottom. Beginning in about 50 feet of water, steep vertical walls hold gorgonian fans, seaweeds and encrusting sponges.

Actually touching U/W, two ships from the two different wars lie in the calm waters of Apra Harbor. The **SMS Cormoran** is a 320 foot long auxiliary cruiser, built in China as part of the Russian fleet. Today, the *Cormoran* lies on its side between 70 and 120 feet. A largely empty hulk, its spacious holds and meandering passageways are home to clouds of fish and a number of morays.

The **Tokai**, a 500 foot Japanese freighter, lies just to the side of the *Cormoran*, beginning in only 50 feet of water. Sunk by a torpedo during the assault on Guam during World War II, it is relatively clean of growth and easy to explore.

Excellent dive operators, including Micronesia Divers Association and Guam Tropical Dive Station take divers to any of Guam's best sites.

Rota, to the northwest of Guam, is a small, jungled, mountainous island that is virtually undeveloped and scarcely populated. Its green hillsides slope down

to a flat, table reef that extends from most of the coastline.

For divers, Rota is at the point of discovery. Dive Rota provides diving in spectacularly clear waters featuring dramatic walls, a World War II wreck and an eerily beautiful undersea grotto.

Saipan, just to the north, is a popular Japanese destination, with great resorts and active nightlife. Relics from the war can be seen everywhere, including a wrecked tank that sits in the shallow, inner reef waters just off hotel row on Saipan's most popular beach. For divers, there are submerged ships and airplanes in many areas of the island's clear, warm waters. The most famous dive, however, is the unique **Blue Grotto**, where divers enter the sea from inside a huge cavern reachable from the land side, then swim out to open water through the yawning, submerged cave mouth. All American Divers provides a selection of dive options.

YAP

Yap is a one hour, 45 minute flight southwest of Guam. With an airport and a small port town the only modern developments, Yap's four small islands, with their tiny, traditional villages, reveal the Micronesia of old. Life goes on much as it has for centuries; the slow, comfortable pace, quick, bright smiles

and solid, self-reliance are clear evidence of a people and culture at peace with their surroundings and lifestyle.

Traditions go deep, including governance by island chiefs and use of ancient currency, huge disks of stone money that can be seen in local villages along the roadside. There are carefully built men's houses, where the men of each village meet. And for visitors, there are dancing and singing exhibitions. Put on by local residents, these both preserve the old ways and give shyly welcomed guests a rare opportunity to experience Micronesian art.

Exploration around the islands shows a rich, jungled land of hillsides and quiet lagoons. Coconut palms and mangrove forests line the shore and brilliant ocean views stretch away in every direction from the top of the low peaks.

World War II also left its mark on Yap, as it did on most of Micronesia. A wrecked Japanese Zero aircraft can still be seen and a short jungle hike to the interior of the main island leads to a downed lighthouse.

THE DIVING: Yap is blessed with a variety of diving—walls, heavily-coraled slopes and twisting tidal channels, all packed with marine life. Outside waters

are very clear—with visibility normally in the 100 to 150 foot range. In channels, the visibility varies, of course, dependent upon tide and weather.

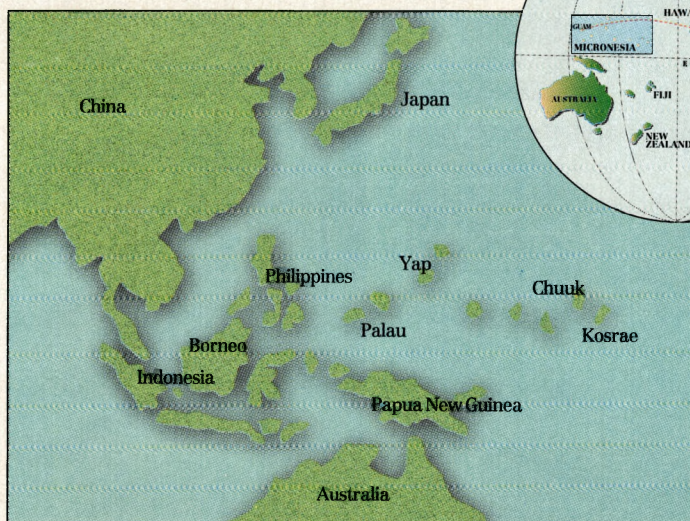
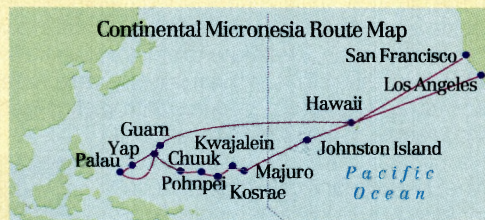
One of the best outer reef dives is **Lionfish Wall**. Here, the wall is very steep, even more than vertical in many places. Huge, brownish zoanthids, looking like giant, leathery coral polyps, cover the reef face and large schools of damselfishes and *Anthias* dart about just above the coral surface. In one place on the wall, a series of shallow overhangs gives the dive its

CONTINENTAL MICRONESIA

International and domestic travel within Micronesia can be arranged through Continental Airlines and its subsidiary, Continental Micronesia. Flights depart Los Angeles and San Francisco daily. All flights change planes in both Guam and Hawaii; the total in-flight time is about 15 hours.



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DIVE YAP ISLAND OF THE MANTAS



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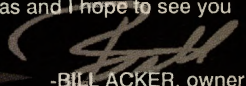
We're perhaps best known throughout the world for our unique disks of Stone Money, carved from distant shores and brought at great human cost on epic voyages by ocean canoe. We're proud of the rich and ancient culture of Yap, which is intact, vibrant and accessible to every visitor.

To divers, however, Yap is even better known for being host to some of the most spectacular and legendary dive sites in the world. Visit Mi'l Channel, where Giant Manta Rays stage a daily undersea ballet. Single Manta encounters are a rare and tremendous experience elsewhere, but on Manta Ridge, our Mantas stream in and out in formations, often more than a dozen at a time! And there's more...discover outer drop-offs that offer crystal clear visibility in excess of 100 feet, colorful vertical walls, coral caverns, relics from World War II, morays, stingrays, giant turtles, armadas of lionfish, massive schools of Trevally, all these and more in an island whose 90 miles of barrier reef are, until now still largely unexplored.

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So, why not get in touch with me today and ask me about our special 5 day/5 night Dive Package and I'll tell you about our special little island and how to get here... or we can simply talk diving! The mantas and I hope to see you soon!


-BILL ACKLER, owner

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MICRONESIA

name—inside are numerous lionfish.

Down the wall is another of Yap's best—**Yap Caverns**. Just below the surface, coral canyons form twisting tunnels and large, white-sand bottomed grottos. Whitetip Reef Sharks lie in secluded places and Glassy Sweepers and soldierfish mill about in the darkened caverns. Near the steep drop-off, schools of jacks patrol and turtles munch on sponges.

Yap's trademark, however, is its rare opportunity to dive, day after day, with schools of large Manta Rays that come into the channels to be cleaned. During winter and spring, the Mantas are found at Mil Channel, on the island's northwest side, at the site called **Manta Ridge**. As many as 12 to 14 Mantas ride in on the incoming morning tide to stop at a 40 foot deep coral prominence. As the large, graceful creatures sweep in, clouds of wrasse, damsels and butterflyfish come up to meet them, roaming over their bodies to pick off parasites.

During summer and fall, the Mantas

YAP'S ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVING

The choice of accommodations and dive services is an easy one in Yap—Manta Ray Bay is the favorite hotel and the on-site Yap Divers provides the dive services.

The hotel is modern and well maintained, with an excellent restaurant and bar on the top floor. The 23 air-conditioned rooms come with refrigerators and video systems (several have comfortable waterbeds).

Yap Divers, a PADI Five Star Dive Center, uses fast, flattop boats and offers a full range of equipment rentals and a wide range of specialty training, including the Manta Diver specialty. Associated with Yap Divers is Manta Visions, a full service video and photo center.



switch to the island's east side, coming to Goofnuw Channel, to a site appropriately named **Valley of the Rays**. Here, a large coral mound looms up from a gravel bottom at 60 feet; divers kneel at the sides of the mound as Mantas move in one or two at a time to be cleaned. Afterward they wheel majestically away. This continues until the tide shifts outbound; as the Mantas depart, the divers ride the current out toward the wall, passing turtles, Leopard Sharks, snappers and many other schooling fish.

PALAU

Another one-half hour southwest of Yap lies the jewel of the Micronesian diving experience—the island archipelago of Palau. For all that has been said, filmed and written about Palau, it remains a splendid and awe-inspiring surprise to the first time visitor. Yet, it has so many experiences to offer that it remains fascinating and freshly exciting to divers who come back year after year.

The first view of Palau from the airplane window is a storybook and picture post card all in one. A huge, turquoise lagoon stretches away toward the horizon and live coral reefs are everywhere, clearly visible through the crystalline water. More than 300 jungled islands lie scattered throughout the calm, inner reef waters, many ringed with glare-white, sand beaches, others rising straight from the sea—verdant mounds of vegetation lapped by calm, warm waters.

The islands' immense natural beauty is difficult to adequately describe. Inside the lagoon, channels wind and twist among the small Rock Islands. Pink-hued fields of corals lie just beneath the surface of the near transparent water and colorful tropical fish, turtles and Eagle Rays can be seen moving slowly about.

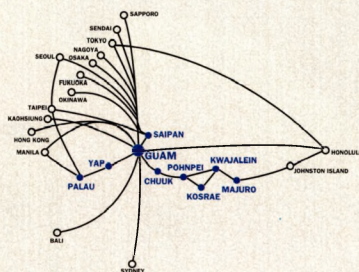
The islands themselves are a riot of colors and shapes, like tropical gardens on an immense scale. Ferns, flowers, jungle shrubs and massive, spreading trees compete for space, covering every inch of landscape. Many-hued birds glide on the gentle trade winds. At the water's

ISLANDS OF MICRONESIA

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edge, huge marine caverns have been eaten into the rocky faces and in the interiors of larger islands are marine lakes and cascading waterfalls.

Like all of Micronesia, Palau's history is one of seafaring tribes, master navigators and fisher folk whose relationship with the sea dominates their lifestyle and traditions.

The Palauan people's fierce warrior past comes through in their dances and songs and in beautifully carved storyboards that depict ancient legends and familiar scenes of island life. Local art can be found in many forms, displayed in the main town of Koror, in carvings, paintings and drawings.

World War II also left its mark on Palau. Occupied by the Japanese early in the

war, Palau was the scene of intense battles, including one now permanently a part of U.S. Marine Corp historical lore, on the southern island of Peleliu.

In 1944, U.S. Marines faced heavily entrenched Japanese forces—who refused to surrender—fighting from an extensive system of caves, bunkers and tunnels. The conflict lasted more than two months. When the U.S. forces finally prevailed, there had been thousands of casualties on both sides. Today, the island is home to war memorials from both countries and wreckage from the carnage is scattered throughout the island's green hillsides.

Other islands have war wreckage that

can be viewed as well. A cavernous Japanese seaplane base, complete with bombed seaplanes, can be visited on Babelthup and a strafed German lighthouse, surrounded by the wreckage of Japanese bunkers, buildings and artillery pieces, lies at the end of a short hike on Ngeruktabel Island.

Although most visitors come to Palau for the diving, there is a real difficulty in deciding among the many options now becoming available. New offerings include days of kayaking among the Rock Islands, camping on uninhabited islets and numerous hiking and sightseeing tours.

THE DIVING: With all this, however,

PALAU'S DIVE OPERATORS AND LIVE-ABOARDS

Palau is served by a large number of professional dive operators who offer a variety of diving, snorkeling and sightseeing tours.

Fish 'n Fins, Palau's original dive operation, has provided daily trips to Palau's top spots for more than 20 years. Next door to the Palau Marina Hotel, Fish 'n Fins uses small, fast boats for quick trips to dive areas.

Neco Marine is a modern retail facility that operates a fleet of fast, modern, flattop and cabin cruiser style boats. A PADI Dive Center, Neco offers instruction and photo services and picks guests up at most Palau hotels. Neco specializes in less dived areas and special requests are easily accommodated.

Splash is a PADI Five Star Dive Center on the dock at Palau Pacific Resort. Its two large, jet driven dive boats feature hot showers, photo tables and heads, for the utmost comfort. Photo Palau, a full service U/W photo center, is just next door.

Another of the original Palau dive operations, Palau Diving Center is operated by the same company as the Carp Island Resort. Serving both Japanese and American guests, the center operates three modern dive boats and has PADI, NAUI and JP (a Japanese agency) instructors on staff.

Sam's Dive Tours is a PADI Dive Center and one of the newest of Palau's operations (open for eight years), catering chiefly to American divers. With a selection of topside tours (to World War II sites, caverns and waterfalls) and kayak treks augmenting its dive program, the center can show guests a fascinating aspect of Palau not always seen by visitors. A wide range of specialties and full photo services are also available.

Peter Hughes' *Sun Dancer* is a 119 foot long, ocean cruising vessel, with eight spacious staterooms to accommodate 16 passengers. Fine dining, full photo services and a great dive tender boat make the ship an excellent means to explore the entire Palau archipelago.

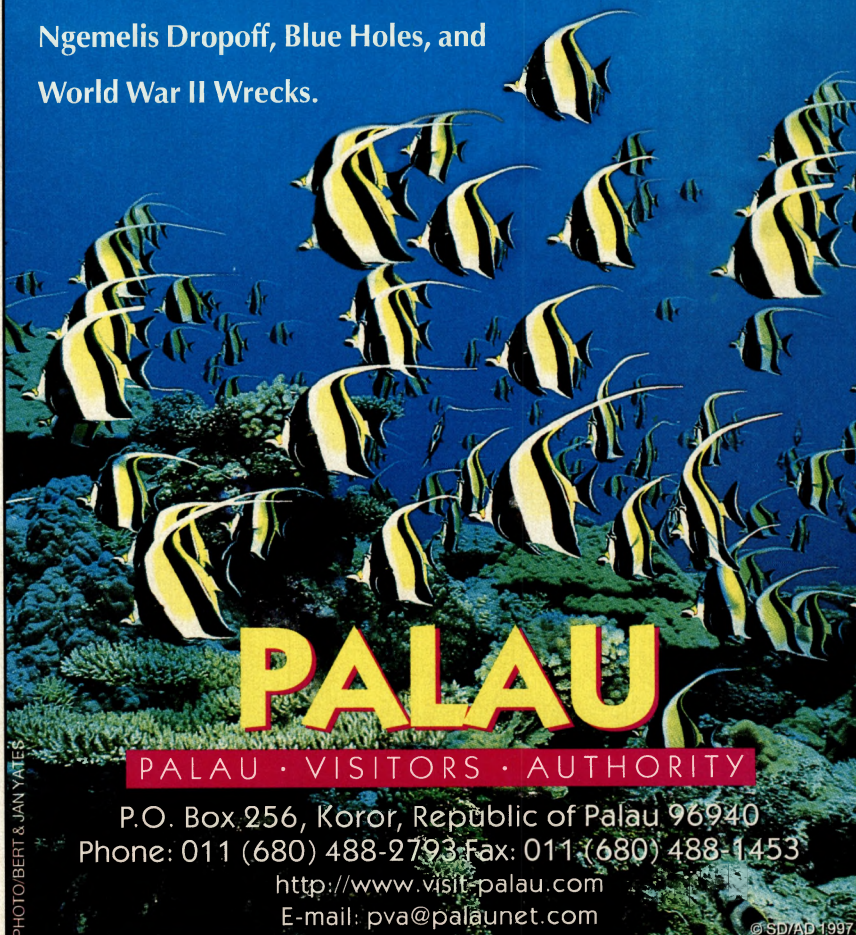
The *Palau Aggressor II* measures 110 feet in length in a twin hulled catamaran design that enjoys both speed and stability. With eight private staterooms for 16 passengers, it provides complete dive services—including photo processing—excellent buffetstyle meals and a range of entertainment, all in a modern, comfortable setting.

Designed for small groups, *Ocean Hunter* is a 60 foot long motor sailor that carries up to six passengers and specializes in truly unlimited diving. Her dive cruises can be custom designed, lasting from 7 to 14 days, for an enjoyable, economical live-aboard experience.

PALAU: The Number One Underwater Wonder of the World



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MICRONESIA

Palau's diving remains its most incredible feature. Its clear, warm (84°F) water; its collection of marine life, from the smallest invertebrates and colorful reef tropicals to the most awesome big animals, such as sharks, Mantas and marine mammals; and its tremendous diversity, with walls, channels, huge inner lagoon reef systems and World War II shipwrecks—all combine to provide a vacation dive experience seemingly without limits.

Perhaps Palau's most publicized dive, yet one that never fails to excite, is **Blue Corner**. At the top of a steep wall, in only 45 feet of water, divers wait in the brisk current. Just more than an arm's length away, Gray Reef Sharks mill about, cruising the wall. Blackfin Barracuda circle overhead, their silhouettes creating a huge, dark ring in the bright water. A three foot long Napoleon Wrasse, very accustomed to visiting divers, comes close to stare with large, rolling eyes.

On the northwest side of Palau's lagoon is an incredible but much less visited area known as **West Passage**. A gigantic tidal channel through the reef, the passage is a gathering place of many different fish species, all assembled for the nutrient

exchange where lagoon and ocean waters meet. Large growths of hard and soft corals cling to the channel's steep sides and huge schools of snappers and surgeonfish feed in the brisk current. And all around, oceanic predators such as Gray Reef Sharks, jacks and Trevally sweep through shoals of silvery baitfish.

Palau's favorite wreck dive is an artifact from World War II, the Japanese cargo ship **Teshio Maru**. A 321 foot long, 2,840 ton vessel, it lies on its starboard side, where it came to rest after being sunk during Operation Desecrate in March 1944. Hard corals and seaweeds grow profusely on the wreck and a resident school of Barracuda circles overhead. Within the easily penetrated hulk are china, medical supplies and the ill-fated crew's personal belongings.

Peleliu Corner never fails to surprise and delight with high adrenaline dives and big critter interactions. At the southern end of the lagoon, off Peleliu Island, a steep, rough wall cut with canyons and grottos drops dizzily from 45 feet into the depths. The current and frequent upwellings bring nutrients to the wall's sessile inhabitants and gorgonians, soft corals, seaweeds and huge Black Coral bushes grow thickly across the face. Large groupers move about the wall and Wahoo, tuna, Blackjacks and other pelagics are numerous. Sharks are everywhere—often as many as

20 to 30 at a time are in view, restlessly patrolling the wall's edge.

Palau's most unique dive is actually a snorkel in a marine lake high atop one of the Rock Islands. **Jellyfish Lake**, as it is aptly named, was trapped when the reefs were upraised eons ago. In the lake were *Mastigias* jellyfish that gradually adapted to the ever-decreasing salinity of the lake's waters. Today, the lake is fresh water in its upper reaches and the jellyfish

PALAU'S ACCOMMODATIONS

Palau enjoys a wide selection of accommodations, from economy to luxury, including traditional island style.

Palau Pacific Resort is considered one of the finest dive resorts in the world. Featuring a white sand beach, swimming pool, fine restaurants and immaculately groomed hotel grounds, its rooms are modern and sumptuous and its staff has been well trained in the nuances of customer service. With a dive center (Splash), photo center (Photo Palau) and dive boats on-site, it is a marvelous base for a Palau dive adventure.

Sunrise Villa sits atop a high hill, with majestic views of the lagoon. It has 34 comfortable rooms and an excellent restaurant.

Palau Marina, a reasonably priced hotel, sits near Koror's harbor. It provides an excellent restaurant and bar and great diving convenience—just next door is the Fish 'n Fins Dive Center, Palau's longest established dive operator.

The Carolines Resort offers five bungalows, built in traditional (but with all the modern conveniences) island style. On a hill just overlooking the lagoon, its divers are picked up by boats at the Palau Pacific Resort dock.

For those looking for economy accommodations, there are several properties to choose from, including West Plaza Hotel by the Sea, West Plaza Hotel Downtown and the DW Motel.

For those desiring an island experience, Carp Island Resort and Palau Diving Center is on a small island 30 miles to the south of Koror. Near the major diving areas, it provides comfortable lodging in the quiet environment of a pristine portion of Palau's lagoon.

have evolved into a nonstinging form. Now in a huge school, numbering in the millions, the jellyfish follow the sun around the lake, algae inside their bodies producing nutrients from the sunlight. The pulsing multitude of jellyfish creates a fascinating and kaleidoscopic experience.

CHUUK (TRUK)

Chuuk (the original and again current name of Truk), lies an hour and 45 minutes southeast of Guam, also reached by Continental Micronesia flights from Guam. It is a group of 11 coral atolls and mountainous islands scattered around a deep, central lagoon.

The Chuukese are more of a melting pot group than most other Micronesian societies, which have been more successful over the ages at keeping their cultures intact. Chuuk, conversely, has been occupied and dominated by others throughout its history.

Ironically, Chuuk's somewhat tragic history of domination by foreigners—other Micronesians, the Spanish, Germans and

Discover PALAU and see it ALL!

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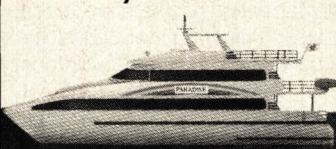
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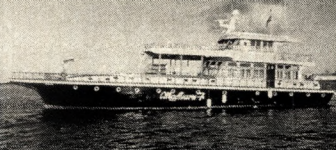
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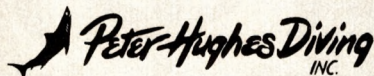


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MICRONESIA

Japanese—has ultimately led to its chief attraction as a current tourist destination. Although in a seemingly remote area of the Pacific, Chuuk actually sits in a strategic center among the major shipping lanes between Hawaii, Japan, the Philippines and Australia. As a result, prior to World

CHUUK'S ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVE OPERATORS

Deciding where to stay and how to dive in Chuuk should be determined by the dive experience desired. Very specialized in their offerings, Chuuk's dive operators provide decidedly different experiences.

For those wishing to have time to fully explore individual wrecks, there's the live-aboard *Truk Aggressor II*. Each day, the 110 foot long vessel anchors at a different wreck and guests can explore to their heart's content. The ship's 10 air-conditioned staterooms, each with private bath, provide a comfortable setting and the large, main salon, photo facilities and entertainment options make *Truk Aggressor II* an excellent base for diving and photography.

For those who wish to dive as many of the wrecks as possible, the live-aboard *Thorfinn II* provides a different but equally specialized approach. *Thorfinn* anchors in a quiet portion of the lagoon and, up to five times each day, sends out several small boats, each to a different wreck. She can comfortably accommodate 26 passengers in 13 large, two bunk cabins, has excellent food, video and other entertainment options and a real surprise—a spa on the stern.

For divers who prefer a shore-based experience, there are two modern hotels available, both on the main island of Moen. These are the Truk Continental and Truk Stop Hotel, both serviced by three excellent dive operators: Blue Lagoon Dive Shop, Micronesia Aquatics, and Sun Dance Tours and Dive Shop.

War II, the Japanese occupied the islands and turned them into a naval fortress.

In what was, at the time, the largest bombing campaign in warfare history, Operation Hailstone rained down explosives on the Japanese and terrified locals alike. After first eliminating the islands' air defenses, U.S. planes dropped 1,238 tons of bombs during 45 days of attack.

THE DIVING: Today, the shipwrecks of Chuuk Lagoon are inarguably the world's most dramatic wreck dive experience. Massive ships of war—most more than 400 feet long—lie in clear, calm, shallow water, covered by soft corals, gorgonians and circled by huge schools of fish and other marine life. Words to explain the impressions of diving Chuuk Lagoon are difficult to find—the experience is simply too awe-inspiring.

One of the most exciting Chuuk finds is the most recently discovered major wreck, the 336 foot long destroyer **Fumitsuki Maru**. Sitting upright on the bottom, near the outer reefline, the top of the bridge is at 85 feet, the deck at 110 feet. Four, 4.7 inch deck guns and six torpedo tubes on the surprisingly narrow ship are clear evidence of the *Fumitsuki*'s deadly purpose; she was designed for speed and destruction. Yet, time and nature's hand have worked their magic; the ship's efficient lines have been softened by corals and gently swaying gorgonians.

Another fascinating wreck is the 450 foot long transport ship **Kiyozumi**. Lying on her side, her smooth hull is in only 40 feet of water, she is a huge ship; her su-

WHAT TO WEAR

Micronesia, like most places in the tropics, can expose you to conditions you may not be used to. It's wise to bring appropriate clothing for all the conditions you may face.

From January until the end of May, expect the driest weather. The sun blazes and it's hot. The islands are very casual, so plan on lots of comfortable, cotton clothes such as shorts, tanks and T-shirts. Sunburn protection is a must; bring along a good hat and whatever you like to wear to keep the sun off (as long as it's cool). Be sure to bring some sandals and tennis shoes for hiking.

In the summer months and through December, it can rain—a lot. A light rain slicker and hat are handy but remember, it will still be warm.

In the dry season, water temperatures will be around 82 to 84°F. A 3mm shorty wetsuit will be adequate for most people; some prefer nylon/Lycra skins. During rainy periods, water temperatures will drop slightly and a 3mm jumpsuit will be appreciated (any wind and rain on boat rides can also make it seem colder than it actually is).

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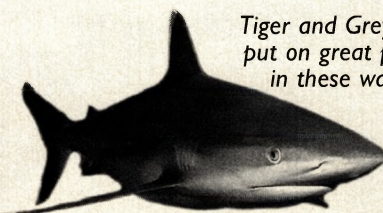
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MICRONESIA

perstructure and masts loom out and downward into deep blue. At 75 feet, there is a small hold that can be entered. Bicycles, their rubber tires still intact, line the walls. Forward, the bow tells the story of *Kiyozumi*'s demise—a massive hole was blown through both sides of the hull by a detonating explosive. Soft white gorgonians hang from the torn metal and move gently in the quiet waters.

Perhaps the single most beautiful wreck in the lagoon is the ***Shinkoku Maru***, a 500 foot long tanker. The top of the bridge is in only 45 feet of water. The ship is covered with soft corals of every color of the rainbow and clouds of fish hover over her. The bridge contains the ship's telegraph and her huge masts still stand, shrouded with corals, sponges and shellfish.

The ***Fujikawa Maru*** is likely the most well-known wreck. She is also one of the most dramatic. She is a large, six hold, converted aircraft ferry, 435 feet in length. Lying upright on the bottom, her mast breaks the surface, her stack is only 35 feet below it and the main deck is at 60 feet. Her big, six inch bow and stern guns are now beautifully transformed by lush, hanging soft corals in red, orange and purple.

POHNPEI

East-southeast of Chuuk, some 40 minutes' flying time, the top of an ancient volcano juts up from the otherwise featureless, blue ocean. Tall, black rock spires reach into the clouds and deep green, jungled slopes tumble steeply to a bright, turquoise lagoon.

Pohnpei is 200 square miles of tropical paradise, the likes of which could only be

POHNPEI'S ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVE OPERATORS

Pohnpei's most popular accommodation is a lovely, island style resort known as The Village. With its thatched palm bungalows built onto the side of a steep, jungled hill, the views are spectacular, encompassing mountains and lagoon. The resort's restaurant is well known for its excellent food, which includes local specialties such as fresh tuna, lobster and mangrove crab.

Other choices for visiting divers are several economical hotels such as The Harbor View, Cliff Rainbow Hotel, Hotel Pohnpei and The Palm Terrace Hotel.

Pohnpei is home to a number of professional dive operators. Phoenix Marine Sports Club, Village Divers at The Village Resort, Ehu Tours and Blue Oyster all cater to the American market and specialize in small groups.

found in imagination. In fact, Pohnpei has often been described as the world's most beautiful island—and it very adequately lives up to this lofty reputation.

Just offshore, a barrier reef encircles the island, creating a shallow lagoon practically filled with corals and colorful reef tropicals. At reef's edge, steep slopes and walls fall rapidly away into deep ocean, where pelagics are often seen by divers.

Visitors to Pohnpei should allow ample time for sightseeing. Besides the impressive Nan Madol ruins, there are majestic waterfalls, such as Kepirohi Falls, a Spanish fort from the 1850s and Japanese shrines from World War I.

THE DIVING: Pohnpei's diving is still in a period of discovery. Blessed with incredibly clear water, the island's near and offshore reefs have massive stands of hard corals of many varieties. The choice sites are many and chiefly feature dives on walls, reef passes and around several electrifying offshore atolls.

Big animals, such as sharks, Mantas and Eagle Rays are seen in the passes and on the outer reefs. Especially exciting is the diving around **Ant Atoll**, one of two atolls 10 miles off the southwest coast. It has crystal clear water and teeming coral gardens. **Ant Pass**, which cuts through the reefline, provides a fast paced drift dive in the midst of Gray Reef Sharks and schooling Barracuda. Eighteen miles to the northeast lies small **Pakin Atoll**, noted for stands of huge gorgonian fans and massive hard coral structures. Since it's in deep, ocean waters, pelagic species

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Frequent high-energy encounters with Reef Sharks, Pelagics, Whalesharks, Pilot Whales, Humpbacks, Sperm Whales and large schools of Jacks are common throughout the region. Only five hours from Hawaii, this

Micronesian destination, complete with warm, crystal clear water, truly is a diver's adventure paradise.

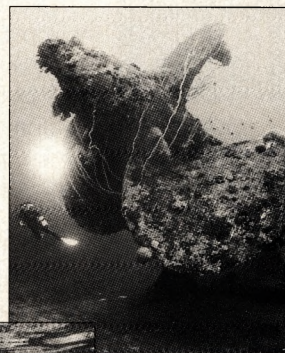
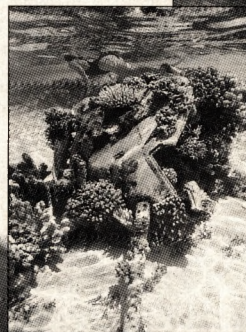


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are common, with tuna, jacks and sharks seen on most dives.

KOSRAE

Forty minutes east of Pohnpei by jet lies Kosrae, a small—only 42 square miles—but dramatic high island. Kosrae resembles its ancient legend—an island formed by gods from the body of a sleeping woman.

Rugged mountain peaks, shrouded in mist, slope down to palm covered coastal lands. Along the shore, white sand beaches intermingle with mangrove-filled bays and a string of tiny islands. Blessed by sunshine and ample rainfall, Kosrae

KOSRAE'S ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVE OPERATORS

Kosrae's range of accommodations has been growing in recent years and there are now a number from which to choose.

The Sandy Beach Hotel has diving provided on-site by Dive Caroline. The Pacific Tree Lodge offers diving via the Phoenix Marine Sports Club, a full service operation.

The new Kosrae Village Resort provides traditional island style accommodations. The resort's owners are dive instructors and operate an on-site dive center.

Kosrae Nautilus Resort is a new, modern resort designed specifically for divers. All-inclusive, it has a restaurant, pool, dive center and dive boat on the premises. The dive operation is run by a certified divemaster.

has thick, rain forest vegetation and sparkling waterfalls in its quiet interior.

Hiking on Kosrae is excellent and the tropical landscape is lush and picturesque. There is an easy walk to beautiful Yekula Falls. For more serious hikes, the Finkol Hiking Trail winds away into the island's rugged interior, ultimately reaching the peak of Mount Finkol at 2,000 feet.

The island's people are friendly and enjoy a quiet, simple lifestyle. Their deeply religious attitudes have combined with their Micronesia traditions of sharing and openness, and visitors find them generous and welcoming. More than one visitor has been surprised to casually receive a gift of bananas or other fruit upon a chance and casual meeting.

THE DIVING: Kosrae has a fringing reef that surrounds the island and it is in pristine condition. Because of Kosrae's remote location and the virtual absence of industry, shipping or coastal development, its corals remain healthy.

A tremendous variety of hard corals and reef tropicals are the chief trademark of Kosrae waters. Incredible numbers of angelfish, butterflyfish, triggerfish, groupers, parrotfish and damsels will be seen, darting among rich coral meadows.

At the other end of the adrenaline spectrum Kosrae also scores high marks. Situated in deep ocean water, it enjoys impressive numbers of oceanic species such as tuna, sharks and Eagle

Rays. Even more exciting, perhaps, are the unusual numbers of marine mammals that can be seen—Spinner, Pacific and Bottlenose Dolphins are frequent. To add even more, the December mating season brings huge numbers of turtles to the island's shores. Watching turtles lay eggs is a rare and touching experience.

THE MARSHALLS

The closest of the Micronesia islands to the U.S., the Marshalls lie only five hours—2,200 miles—southwest of Hawaii, reachable by Continental Micronesia.

Within this vast archipelago are thousands of pristine, unexplored coral reefs and a vast assortment of marine creatures, undisturbed by modern development. Actually, very little of the Marshalls has been dived at all and new discoveries are being made every day.

MAJURO ATOLL

Majuro Atoll, the most developed part of the Marshalls, is also the islands' entry point. It consists of a chain of long, slender islands encircling an immense lagoon. The low sand islands barely exceed sea level and are chiefly brilliant white sand with coconut palms and coral island foliage. A stopover point for visitors traveling to the main diving areas, it offers war ruins to explore and the interesting Alele Museum.

The best Majuro dives are at such sites as **Coral Pinnacles**, **Delap Point**, **The Parking Lot** and **The Channel**. The areas all feature profuse hard corals and clouds of reef tropicals. It's also possible to visit more remote areas at **Arno Atoll**, where larger marine animals such as sharks, Eagle Rays and turtles are frequently encountered.

KWAJALEIN

Those who have worked at and visited this remote atoll over the years have long known what the diving world is just beginning to discover—the lagoon and its surrounding reef feature world-class diving, with wrecks, river reefs and walls.

Kwajalein's most popular dive is the huge German cruiser, **Prince Eugen**. The stern breaks the surface and the bow sits at 120 feet. One of the most impressive warships divable in clean, tropical water anywhere, its gigantic size and heavy armament are awe-inspiring. In other parts of the lagoon are a number of other Japanese ships, B-25 bombers and Japanese Zeros. On the outside of the reef, steep walls are covered with prolific coral growth and sharks and pelagics are numerous. The visibility is almost always in excess of 100 feet.

BIKINI ATOLL

One of the great tragedies of modern times took place at lonely Bikini Atoll, at

DRIFT DIVING

Many of Micronesia's top dive sites, especially off Yap and Palau, are in areas where nutrient rich currents sweep past reefs and walls. Whether near tidal channels or at the ends of islands where water patterns converge, the result is a congregation of marine life species and exciting feeding activity.

The currents circulate oxygen and organic matter, which give rise to large numbers of corals, sponges, gorgonians and other sessile organisms that pluck their food from the water as it sweeps by. Additionally, schools of small fish are attracted to the same nutrition sources. This, of course, brings in packs of predators such as jacks, Barracuda and sharks, each feeding on the next level down the food chain.

For divers, these areas are the most impressive, not only for the sheer numbers of marine animals but also for the activity—eating and being eaten is definitely *not* a lethargic process in the ocean!

For those who have not dived in such currents before, the first time may be a bit intimidating. In reality, drift diving, as it is called, is actually less strenuous than diving from an anchored boat or shore, where a return trip must be made to the starting point of the dive.

While orientation or training in any new diving activity is always recommended, a few simple tips can help make drift diving experiences easier, safer and more enjoyable. First, since the boat will be following you as you drift, it's important to listen carefully to the divemaster's instructions. All operations don't conduct drift dives in the same manner; following the procedures carefully will prevent separation from the boat.

Staying close to your buddy or to the group, depending upon how the dive is conducted, is even more important while drift diving. If currents are swift, getting separated can happen quickly. Good buoyancy control skills are valuable as well.

Finally, it's wise to carry some sort of surface audio or visual signaling device, such as a Safety Sausage, a diver's flag or miniature air horn. In fact, some dive operators supply these devices to their divers.

In Palau, there's a unique approach to conducting a stationary dive, even in a strong current. At Blue Corner, one of Palau's most exciting dives, the shark and other big fish action happens at one spot on the wall. With currents often too strong to swim against, the dive operators have come up with an interesting solution—the reef hook.

A large metal hook is attached to a short line, which is attached to the BC. To remain in one spot, you merely locate an area on top of the wall that is not live coral, snag the hook onto the bottom and relax, letting the dramatic action of Blue Corner unfold before your eyes.

MICRONESIA

the northern end of the Marshalls' chain. After removing the island's inhabitants, the United States began a series of nuclear tests, more than 20 in all, including the largest hydrogen bomb ever exploded.

Time and a recent massive cleanup have led to resettlement. For divers, there is another benefit—a huge fleet of naval

vessels, used as targets during testing, litters the bottom of the lagoon. The list includes the 900 foot long aircraft carrier **Saratoga**, the submarines **Pilot Fish** and **Apogon**, and the battleships **Arkansas** and **Nagato**. Recently discovered, upright on the bottom and fully loaded with guns and torpedoes, is the destroyer **USS Lamson**. Destined to become the world's next great wreck dive site, the area is newly accessible and visitors come away thunderstruck by the incredible visual and emotional experience.

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THE MARSHALLS' ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVE OPERATORS

Majuro: The best known accommodation is the Hotel Robert Reimers. Centrally located in the local business district, it has comfortable, inexpensive rooms and a restaurant on the premises. At the hotel dock is Marshalls' Dive Adventures, a full service operation that offers two dive boats and visits sites around Majuro and other nearby atolls.

The new 150 room Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort provides all the necessary amenities and also offers diving through Marshalls' Dive Adventures.

Kwajalein: Divers visiting the lagoon stay at the Anrohasa Hotel on Ebeye Island. KADRI, managed by industry veteran Steve Gavegan, provides local dive services.

Bikini Atoll: Divers visiting Bikini stay and dive with Marshalls' Dive Adventures, which operates a facility that has eight double rooms, all with ocean views, private bath and air-conditioning. Diving is provided from the site, with new full service for technical divers, including both nitrox and tri-mix.

FURTHER READING

Desecrate 1
By Klaus Lindemann
Pacific Press Publications

Diver's Guide to Guam and Micronesia
By Tim Rock
Guam Publications Inc.

Diving & Snorkeling Guide to Palau
By Tim Rock & Francis Toribiong
Pisces Books

*Diving & Snorkeling
Guide to Yap & Guam*
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Micronesian Reef Fishes
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Tropical Pacific Invertebrates
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Coral Reef Press

WW II Wrecks of Palau
By Dan Bailey
North Valley Diver Publications

Yap State
By Tim Rock
Yap State Government

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MICRONESIA

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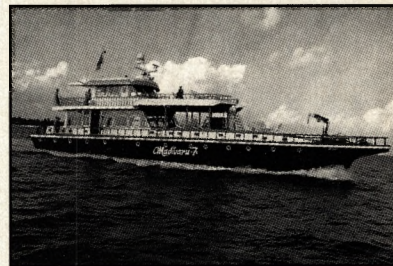


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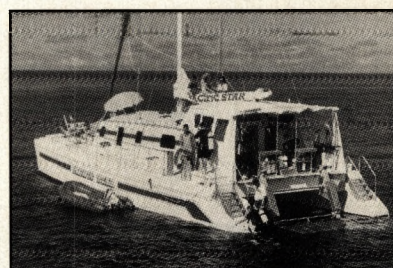


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Here are 12 Great Reasons to Dive Our Waters



For almost 500 years, ships have accidentally collided with this Atlantic island outpost, resulting in the world's greatest under-sea treasure of nautical history. Mile for mile, Bermuda offers the greatest number of divable shipwrecks in the Western Hemisphere.

Bermuda's wreck collection spans five centuries of shipping and includes: a transatlantic luxury liner, numerous steel hulled freighters, a luxury motor yacht, two Civil War paddlewheel blockade runners, a 19th century French warship, a Royal Mail Steam packet, two, four-masted schooners, several 18th century British warships, several

16th century Spanish treasure galleons, plus British, French, Dutch and Portuguese sailing vessels of all kinds. At some sites, shipwrecks are almost piled one on top of another, allowing divers to explore multiple wrecks on the same dive. Bermuda is an aquatic museum without walls and history comes alive as you swim among these marvelous treasures.



 = Designated Shipwreck Certificate site

EXPANDED COLLECTION OF BERMUDA SHIPWRECK CERTIFICATES

CONSTELLATION

A 192 foot American schooner loaded with general cargo, sunk in 1943. Lying at 30 feet is a mound of cement sacks, dishes, bottles, glassware and supplies.

CRISTOBAL COLON

Bermuda's largest shipwreck is the 499 foot Spanish transatlantic luxury liner that sank in 1936. She lies in 55 feet of water with her six boilers still visible.

HERMES

A 165 foot steel hull Buoy Tender, she was sunk as an artificial reef. Fully intact, she sits upright on the sand at 80 feet with mast, wheelhouse and deck winch.

IRISTO (ARISTO)

A 250 foot Norwegian freighter, which sank in 1937. She lies in 50 feet of water with her engine, boilers, propeller and a fire engine still visible.

LARTINGTON

A 245 foot early vintage steel freighter with a cargo of cotton, sunk in 1879. She lies in 15-35 feet of water with boilers, stern section and propeller still visible.

L'HERMINIE

A French 60-gun Man-of-War that sank in 1838. Resting in 25-30 feet of water, this warship's 9 foot long cannons are still onboard.

MARY CELESTIA

A 225 foot side paddlewheel steamer, she served as a Confederate blockade runner. In 55 feet of water, her remains include paddlewheels and anchor.

MINNIE BRESLAUER

A 300 foot steel hulled freighter, sunk on her maiden voyage in 1873. Still visible are the ship's propeller, steam boilers and wheelhouse.

MONTANA (NOLA)

A 236 foot side paddlewheel steamer, sunk in 1863 while running the Civil War blockade. She lies in 30 feet with boilers and paddlewheels intact.

NORTH CAROLINA

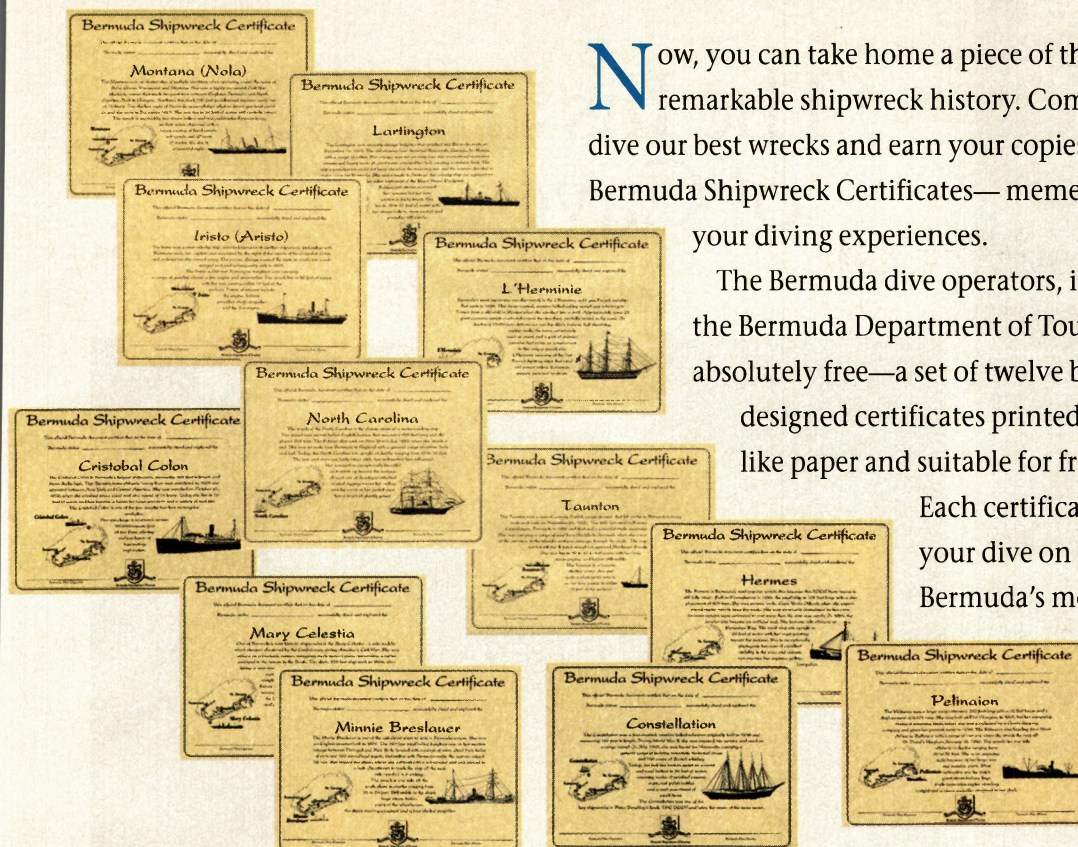
A classic sunken sailing ship, this 205 foot English iron hull bark sank in 1880 and still has her bow sprit, sail rigging and deadeyes in place.

PELINAION

A 385 foot Greek cargo steamer, sunk in 1940 after breaking her back on a reef. Lying at 55 feet, her giant boiler and engine are an awesome sight.

TAUNTON

A 228 foot Norwegian steamer that stranded on North East Breakers in 1920. Sitting at 10 to 40 feet, she is a great shallow dive and a beautiful wreck.



Now, you can take home a piece of this island's remarkable shipwreck history. Come to Bermuda, dive our best wrecks and earn your copies of our Bermuda Shipwreck Certificates— mementos of your diving experiences.

The Bermuda dive operators, in cooperation with the Bermuda Department of Tourism, are offering— absolutely free—a set of twelve beautifully designed certificates printed on parchment like paper and suitable for framing.

Each certificate documents your dive on one of twelve of Bermuda's most popular wreck dives and provides a brief history of the wreck.

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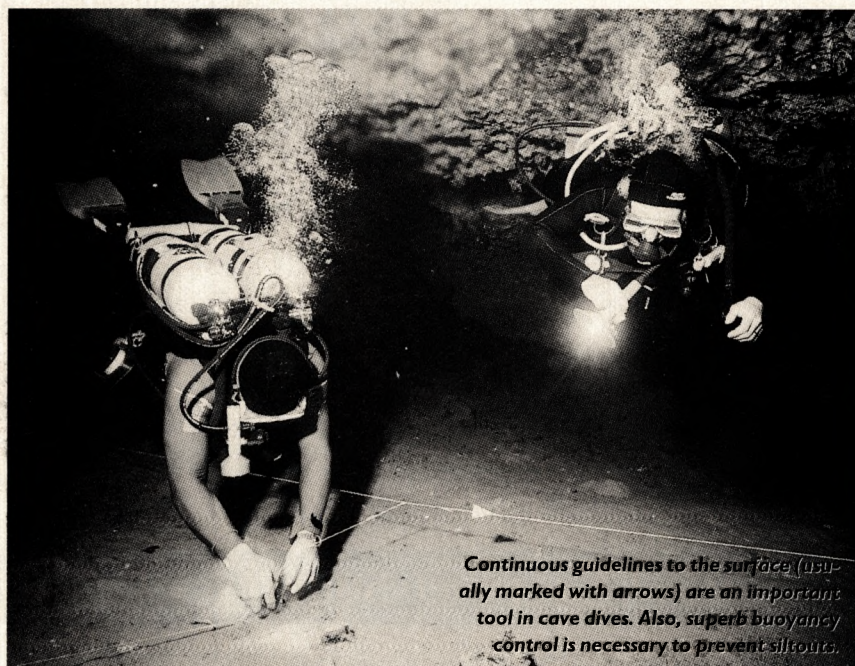
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ADVANCED DIVING

The Ins and Outs of Cave Diving

BY JEANNE BEAR SLEEPER



Continuous guidelines to the surface (usually marked with arrows) are an important tool in cave dives. Also, superb buoyancy control is necessary to prevent siltouts.

photos/Jeffrey E. Bozanic

Since prehistoric times people have been fascinated by caves. Our ancestors found shelter and water, recorded the history of their day, performed religious ceremonies or crawled and climbed to uncover the mysteries of the cave. These prehistoric spelunkers stopped their exploration when confronted with a completely submerged passageway. With the development of scuba, men and women today are exploring water-filled caves in pursuit of scientific knowledge, for adventure or pure curiosity.

Cave diving is an exhilarating, physically and mentally challenging scuba activity. It requires extensive equipment, training and experience to be safe. If cave diving is in your future, begin your journey by contacting the National Association for Cave Diving or the National Speleological Society—Cave Diving Section. These nonprofit educational organizations are dedicated to the safe study, exploration and conservation of caves. Open water certification agencies, such as NAUI or NASDS, also offer specialty cave diving programs that recognize, incorporate or piggyback on the NACD or NSS-CDS programs. Proper training is essential before you attempt cave diving. The safety



Many popular caves in Florida have signs posted at the entrance advising untrained divers of the hazards of proceeding farther.

record of properly trained cave divers is outstanding. The grim fatality statistics of untrained, do it yourself, overconfident open water divers who attempt cave diving is frightening and tragic. Neither this article, books, nor years of open water

diving are a substitute for training from a certified cave diving instructor.

There are many types of caves around the world, including coral caves, sea caves formed by erosion, lava tube caves and underground caves formed by the dissolution of certain kinds of sedimentary rock such as limestone and dolomite by slightly acidic, flowing groundwater. There are also sinkholes, cenotes, karst windows, sumps and underground lakes. By any name, they are all caves and require special equipment, techniques and training.

Caves are places of wonderment. There is a religious feeling that comes with hovering mid-water in a giant room surrounded by stalactites of white, yel-

SAFE CAVE DIVING PRACTICES

1. Be trained and dive within the limitations of your training.
2. Always run a single, continuous guideline from outside the cave entrance throughout the dive. Always secure the line to prevent accidental removal.
3. Always reserve a minimum of two-thirds of your beginning air supply for the trip back.
4. Avoid deep diving.
5. Always carry three dependable lights per person.
6. Become proficient in emergency procedures through practice in open water. Practice just before you make each cave penetration.
7. Avoid panic by knowing and observing your own limitations. Never depend upon another diver's ability to carry you through a dive. The dive team's activities cannot exceed the ability of the least able diver.
8. Stay within arm's reach of the guideline and maintain visual contact with it at all times.
9. Avoid silt by maintaining correct buoyancy and using proper cave diving finning techniques. Check behind yourself for silt. If you have stirred up silt, turn around and begin to exit immediately while maintaining close contact with the guideline and dive team members.
10. Avoid passageways where you cannot turn around or share air easily.
11. Stay near your buddy at all times and watch for signals.
12. Remember that anyone can cancel a cave dive at any time for any reason and all divers exit together. Do not be pressured into attempting a dive or continuing a dive if you feel apprehensive or fearful.
13. Always use the safest possible scuba equipment.
14. Always carry the equipment necessary for handling an emergency and know how to use it.
15. Never permit overconfidence to allow you to rationalize violating recommended cave diving safety procedures.

low and orange. These columns were formed millions of years ago by dripping water, then flooded as the sea level rose. The scene reminds you of the grand cathedrals of Europe. Caves are home to species never found in open water and delight divers who discover the critters and aid in their identification and naming.

THE CAVE ENVIRONMENT

Cave diving involves unique hazards. There is no direct or sometimes even close, access to the surface. This ceiling makes you much more dependent upon your equipment, training and buddy.

Monitoring air supply is critical. Because an emergency swimming ascent is not possible and buddy breathing may not be an option, having an adequate air supply is mandatory. Normal open water reserves are inadequate. Cave divers have used the rule of thirds for years—use one-third going in, one-third coming out and save one-third as a reserve. For

some types of cave diving, even more air than this is saved as a reserve.

Nearly all caves have a fine layer of silt on the bottom, walls or boulder tops. A brush of a fin, rush of water movement or a dragging gauge will disturb the silt and take the visibility from gin clear to zero in a flash. And it does not quickly settle out. A total siltout is one of a cave diver's worst moments. Without a continuous guideline in hand, it can be impossible to find your way out. Cave diving courses teach head-down trim, precise buoyancy control and new fin kicks to reduce the chance of siltouts.

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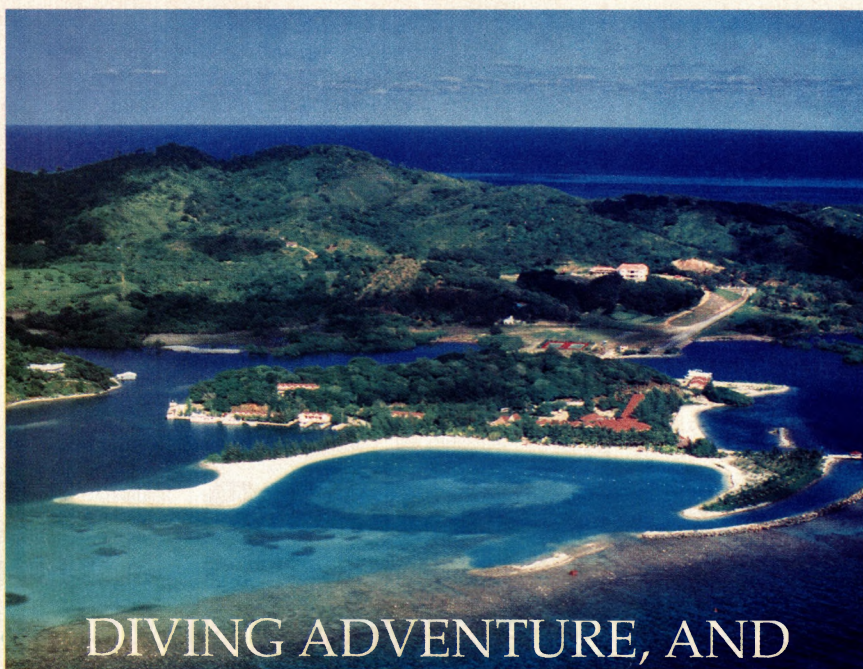
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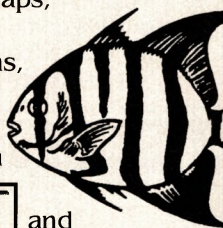
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ADVANCED DIVING

SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT

A continuous, well laid line may be a cave diver's most important supplemental piece of gear. This safety line starts either at the surface or the mouth of the cave and is periodically anchored throughout the cave penetration. This is a lifeline out of the cave in the event of a siltout or a light failure. Never disturb a float or line near a cave. It is not lost or forgotten. Some frequently dived Florida springs have permanent lines. Do not remove, reroute, add a junction to or cut these lines. And, if you are not trained as a cave diver, *never* follow these lines into a cave.

The reel and line used are specially designed for compactness, ease of one-handed use and reduced tangling. Plan to purchase a cave diving reel and new, continuous line when you take a cave diving class.

Other scuba equipment will need to be modified or purchased as well. Cave divers use twin tanks connected with a dual valve manifold; two regulators, one with a five to nine foot octopus hose; full exposure suit; three heavy duty, long lasting lights; full instrumentation; two masks; fins; cave reel and line; buoyancy compensator; knife and backup line cutter; slate; directional line markers; and compass. Extra clips and bands are needed to hold all the equipment close to your body. There is no need for a snorkel. One other essential is a trustworthy, dependable buddy with whom you entrust your life.

SUMMARY

Because training is so important, this article does not contain how to do it instructions. It is merely a peek at what you will need as you begin an adventure that compares to few other explorations on earth. Training to become a cavern diver takes two to three days. Additional training to learn beginning cave diving takes another 8 to 12 days. At the end of the training you will have made 16 to 20 total cave dives.

NACD summarizes its philosophy with the commentary that "there are no short cuts to safe cave diving. Sound judgment, the use of common sense and competent training, followed by patience in gaining personal experience is the only method of achieving the goal of safe cave diving."

For more information or to order books about cave diving, contact the National Association for Cave Diving, P.O. Box 14492, Gainesville, FL 32604 or the National Speleological Society—Cave Diving Section, P.O. Box 950, Branford, FL 32008-0950.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special thanks to Jeffrey Bozanic, NACD and NSS instructor for his review and assistance on this article. 🐠

STUART COVE'S DIVE SOUTH OCEAN

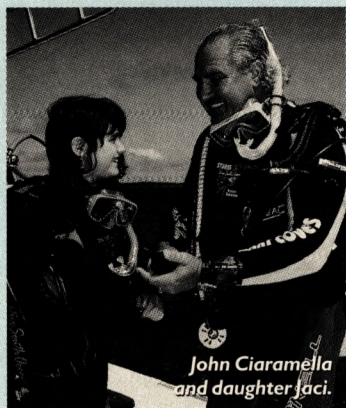
(Continued from Page 81)

er draped in plate coral here with many lobster, eels and fish.

DIVE SOUTH OCEAN: Walk through the gate at Dive South Ocean and you'll see a well organized operation with a lot of smiling faces. Neatly arranged along the waterfront are the dive boutique, camera center, rental equipment and gear storage areas. Show up with only your C-card and a swimming suit if you want

JUNIORS DIVE FREE

Always a great place for families, this summer Dive South Ocean is offering a special program for children between the ages of 12 and 15. One child in that age group goes free with one adult. That means if you take the open water scuba certification course, your child can take



John Ciaramella and daughter Jaci.

photo/Pamela Christman

the junior certification course for free. If you dive, your junior certified child dives free, except for the specialty dives such as the Shark Adventure and Wall Flying.

SOUTH OCEAN GOLF AND BEACH RESORT

On the other side of New Providence from Nassau, the South Ocean Resort is on 190 acres of prime oceanfront property lined with a long, white beach. There are 250 rooms, divided between the beachfront and the golf course. The beachfront rooms feature cool tile floors, exceptionally large bathrooms, satellite television and balconies for enjoying the ocean view. Other amenities include three restaurants, two pools, tennis courts and a special child care facility.

and the staff will outfit you quickly with everything you need. Dive South Ocean's three big compressors and a 90,000 cubic foot cascade system ensure there is plenty of clean, safe air.

Seven custom dive boats let Stuart separate the divers into small groups to avoid crowding. Look around any of the boats and you'll see a very high standard of maintenance and an outstanding attention to detail. The dive ladders extend well into the water at a comfortable angle and there are big, solid handrails to grab onto as you exit. Camera rinse barrels, dry storage areas, coolers, drinking water, freshwater rinse and emergency oxygen are standard features.

THE HOLLYWOOD QUOTIENT: Hollywood movie making has been an integral part of business at Dive South Ocean since

1980, when Stuart worked as a diver, double and shark handler on the James Bond thriller *For Your Eyes Only*. More movie work followed, with *Never Say Never Again*, *Splash*, *Cocoon* and *Jaws—the Revenge*. Hollywood turns to Stuart Cove's time and again because the high quality of the operation is a perfect match for the consistently excellent diving conditions. The entire dive shop and dock area was transformed into a fishing village recently for the movie version of *Flipper*. Most of the set is still intact, making a fascinating backdrop for the daily dive preparations.

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STUART COVE'S DIVE SOUTH OCEAN

TRAVEL INFORMATION: Direct flights to Nassau are available from many East Coast cities, including Miami, New York, Newark, Boston and Washington, D.C. U.S. citizens need a passport or a certified birth certificate and photo ID for entry. U.S. and Bahamian dollars are interchangeable and the electrical systems are compatible. The dress standard is casual, although resort elegant wear may come in handy if you plan to dine out at one of the more formal restaurants.

PHOTO AND VIDEO SERVICES

Pamela Christman manages Fin Photo, the photo and video service at Dive South Ocean. Whether you a beginner or a professional, Fin Photo can provide what you need. The rental still camera inventory includes both the Sea & Sea MX-10 and the Nikonos V. A complete line of lenses is available for the Nikonos cameras. Fin Photo also has a supply of essentials such as O-rings, batteries and film. Daily E-6 processing lets you see your film the next morning. And, Stuart Cove's has been selected as the site of the Nikon School of Underwater Photography from July 19 to 26 this year.

Video enthusiasts will find Hi-8 cameras and housings available for rent, along with one of the most comprehensive video editing stations anywhere. Upstairs there is a dedicated camera changing table, a battery charging station and secure camera storage lockers. In addition to Pam, there are four fulltime staff members at Fin Photo. Besides a friendly bit of help whenever you need it, they make custom videos, shoot underwater portraits and teach photography and video.

For more information or reservations, call Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean at (800) 879-9832. Outside the U.S., call (954) 524-5755 or fax (954) 524-5925. The e-mail address is SCove1045@aol.com.

Dive Notes

FORTE JOINS CAYMAN MADNESS: Forte, a full-line manufacturer of quality scuba diving equipment, has become a full sponsor of Cayman Madness '97.

Forte's latest lines of regulators, BCs, masks, fins, snorkels and other equipment will be available for use—free—by Madness participants during the six week event, scheduled for September and October 1997.

Other major sponsors include SKIN DIVER Magazine, Nikon, PADI, Sea Vision Masks, Sport Diver Manufacturing Company, Cayman Airways and the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. All sponsors make major contributions to the enjoyment of visiting divers.

Cayman Madness is an intensive, exciting, hilarious week-long diving vacation that includes the beautiful walls, wrecks and reefs of Grand Cayman. For reservations or information, contact your local dive shop or call (800) 786-3483. 🐠

A WHALE SHARK VISITS GRAND CAYMAN: Two divers reported seeing a Whale Shark off Grand Cayman in December. Dave Ehnes, a Bob Soto's dive instructor, passed the story off as another fish tale. He had never seen a Whale Shark in Cayman water.

photo/Dave Ehnes



On January 1, Dave was guiding a group of divers through a site off Seven Mile Beach. When they came to the surface, he spotted a group of boats gathered in the distance. Somehow Dave knew the attraction was the Whale Shark.

He arrived in time to see about 20 snorkelers gathered around the 22 foot juvenile Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*), which was calm and complacent on the surface. Dave got his guests in the water.

He was amazed at the Whale Shark's unusual behavior. At times the shark would bring its whole head out of the water, with its mouth open, and then rest at the surface, while snorkelers touched its wide, checkerboard colored skin. Then the shark would make a slow, spiralled descent to about 40 feet, giving snorkelers the ride of their lives.

By the end of the hour long encounter, the group had swelled to about 50. The shark was not frightened and seemed to enjoy the attention. It repeated its diving routine for the duration of the visit and then made one last dive; disappearing into the abyss, never to be seen again.

Whenever you're in the water, keep a wary eye to the blue—next time you may be the object of curiosity for a beneficent denizen of the deep. 🐠

SEA FEVER DIVING CRUISES: Sea Fever Diving Cruises has six different itineraries for week long live-aboard trips though The Bahamas on the 90 foot *Sea Fever*. The *Sea Fever* accommodates 14 guests and is equipped with a DNAX nitrox system.

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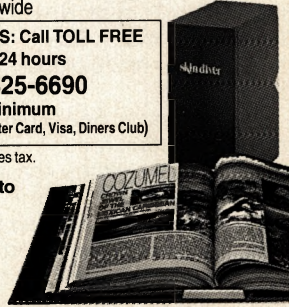
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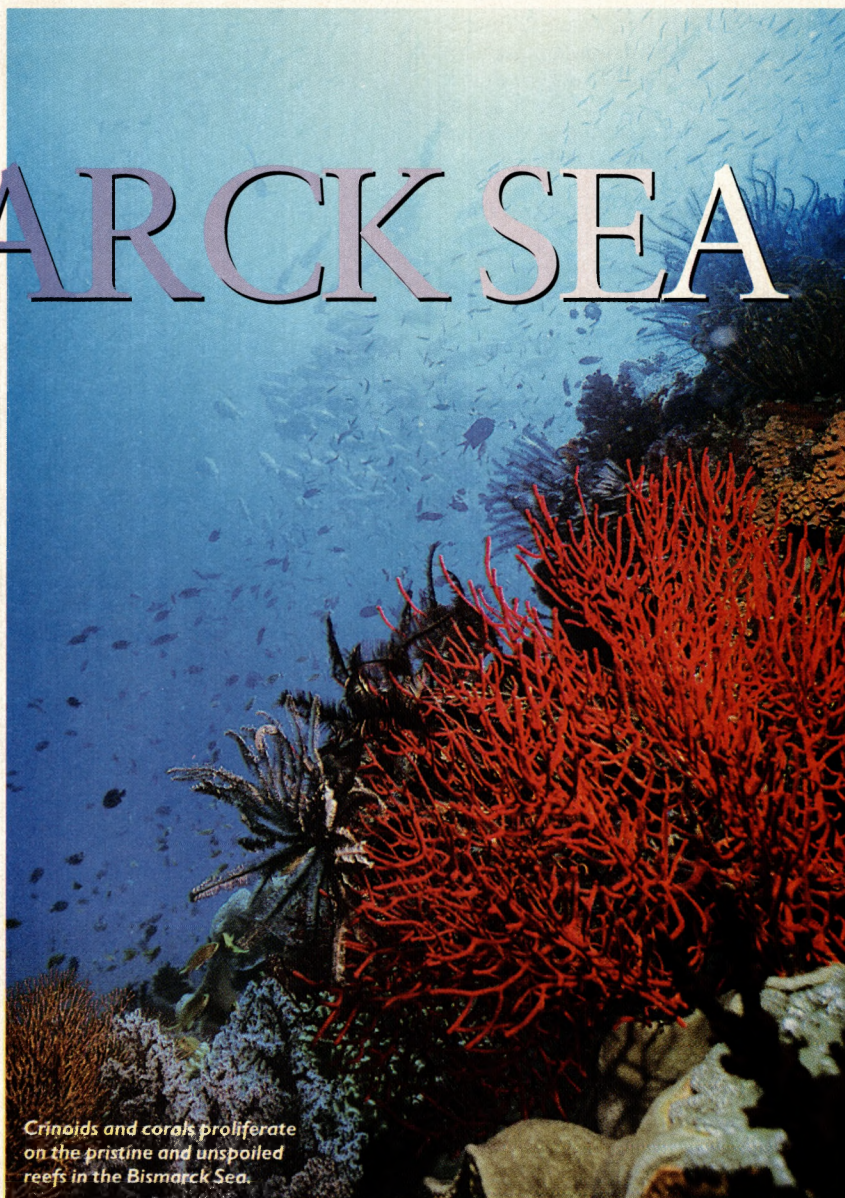
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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL GLEASON

How do you ruin a good breakfast on a world-class live-aboard? Have someone yell "Orcas!" and watch what happens. On a recent trip to New Guinea, our breakfast was shattered with that one word. First the cabin emptied of all passengers and then the crew abandoned their tasks to check out the scene. A minipod of four, 15 to 16 foot Orcas was giving our live-aboard, Peter Hughes' *Star Dancer*, a thorough check out.

Peter Hughes, Captain Don Edwards and I volunteered to be the first free-divers in the water. We dropped in quietly, in the path of the Orcas. Down we went, 30 or 40 feet, no bottom in sight. Out of blue emerged four Orcas, the closest was just a few feet away. The encounter was serene, eerie, silent and awesome. This is diving in the Papua New Guinea's Bismarck Sea—it is the outer limits of the Diving World.

The Bismarck Sea is perhaps one of the last pristine areas in the undersea world. It is remarkably rich in marine life, with schools of fish swarming every pinnacle and marine mammals making consistent appearances (a pod of 15 Orcas calls the Bismarck Sea home year-round). It is the cutting edge of dive travel



Crinoids and corals proliferate on the pristine and unspoiled reefs in the Bismarck Sea.



photo/Tammy Peluso

Above: Pteropus Clownfish (*Amphiprion percula*). Marine life in the Bismarck Sea is exotic and diverse, with new species still being identified. Right: A school of Chevron Barracuda—a familiar sight in this clear, crystal blue water.





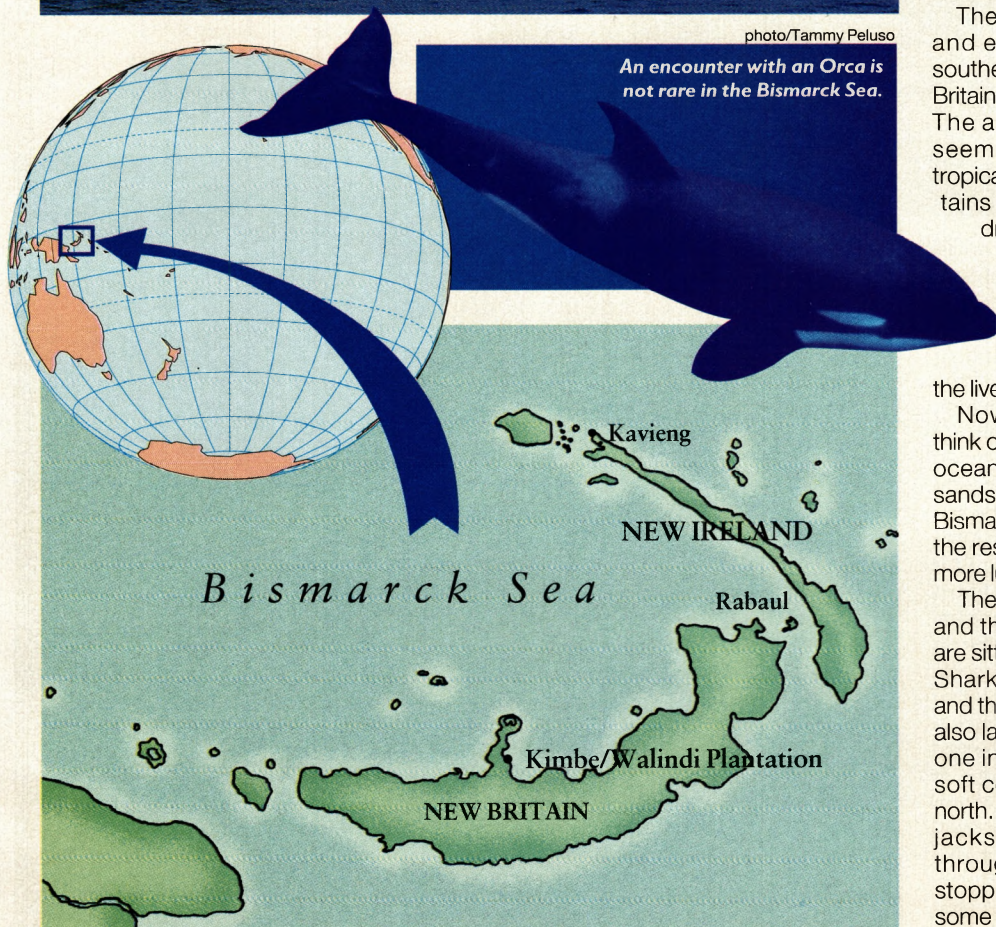
The FeBrina has been newly refitted to world-class standards.

photo/Ron Wyman



Peter Hughes' luxurious, 120 foot Star Dancer.

photo/Tammy Peluso



An encounter with an Orca is not rare in the Bismarck Sea.

and presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore uncharted seas.

Papua New Guinea is no stranger in the diving Hall of Fame, but much of the fabled diving has been done in the Northern Coral Sea and Milne Bay, about an hour south by small plane from where our expedition took place. We were working out of a place called Walindi on New Britain Island, which is about an hour's drive and a lifetime away from anything resembling civilization.

There are plantations here and there, growing copra, and scattered villages, growing not much at all. You will find an "expat" out and about, except for Friday nights, when they all gather at "Max's Place," otherwise known as Walindi Plantation, a 12 room resort that pioneered diving in the Bismarck Sea years ago. It is considered by many to be the doorway to the best diving in the world.

We were there, exploring the outer limits—and it lived up to its reputation. This was my third trip to the area and my first bad weather experience—a big storm pounded Fiji. We dived every day but the conditions were rougher than usual and the sun didn't shine. The guests on the live-aboards that operate out of Walindi didn't seem to mind. They were here to dive and the diving was fabulous, even before the Orcas showed up.

The Bismarck Sea lies to the north and east of Papua New Guinea; its southern border laps the shores of New Britain, which is where the action begins. The area around New Britain Island seems to have been carved out of a tropical wilderness. The towering mountains (up to 14,000 feet) are the backdrop that greets you each day. The area is littered with small islands and shoals, making it easy to find more than 200 dive sites in the area of Kimbe Bay alone (the Bay is closest to Walindi; the live-aboards range farther).

Now, when I say Kimbe Bay, don't think of a small, sheltered bay. It is a large oceanic body of water, covering thousands of square miles. Everything in the Bismarck Sea is on a different scale from the rest of the world—wilder, richer and more lush than any place I've ever seen.

The dive operators (two live-aboards and the land based Walindi Plantation) are sitting on the best diving in the world. Sharks are seen on almost every dive and the Orcas are not unusual. There are also large rays most of the time (we saw one in the mouth of an Orca!) and the soft corals are as prevalent as in Fiji's north. Add to this schooling Barracudas, jacks and other pelagics—halfway through the trip I realized every time I stopped to take a picture I was missing some of the action!

EXPLORING THE BISMARCK SEA

The dive sites here are called "bommies" (Australian for coral head, mates) and are too numerous to list. The sites are similar to pinnacles and sea mounts—they usually start in very deep water and rise dramatically to the surface. As in the South Pacific, the peak time to dive the sites is when there is a little current. The prevailing currents in the Bismarck Sea are gentle in comparison to Cozumel's or Fiji's. It's more like a gentle drift than a real current. The currents bring nutrients, which means the corals open up and feed. When the small fish get into the act, the big fish are not far behind and pretty soon you're running out of superlatives for your dive log!

The Bismarck Sea and Kimbe Bay offer many opportunities for exploration. Visitors should probably plan to spend more than a week here, since the flight time is long and the diving (and PNG culture) rich. Walindi Plantation is the hub of operations and the only land based resort. It has 12 oceanfront bungalows, a main house and pool and offers divers full dive services and Walindi Photo, a full photo facility. Walindi Plantation dives the classic sites of Kimbe Bay—**Inglis Shoals, North Emma, Emma and Cristine's**. Don't miss them.

Both live-aboards, the *Star Dancer* and *FeBrina*, depart and return from Walindi on regular (one week) and extended range (ten day) trips. Peter Hughes' 120 foot *Star Dancer* defines the terms "luxury" and "service" for the entire live-aboard industry. There are eight spacious, deluxe staterooms, all with private bath and shower.

The MV *FeBrina* is a newly refitted 72 foot live-aboard, with seven cabins (three with private bath and four semi private). The comfortable and informal ambiance provides an air of intimacy.

Your first dives aboard these boats will take place right off Walindi in the superb environment of Kimbe Bay. After this, they have different itineraries. *Star Dancer* concentrates on the western areas of the Bismarck Sea, with normal itineraries including the Witu Islands and Garove Island. On extended range trips, it ventures farther west to the Strudels Group, with oceanic pinnacles soaring from 3,000 feet to within 25 feet of the surface. During certain months of the year, *Star Dancer* does sail north and east as well. *Star Dancer* cruises the farthest on regular trips, to the Witu's and beyond.

FeBrina concentrates on Kimbe Bay

sites and ventures north and east to **The Fathers**, which is spectacular. On extended range trips, it also goes to the islands surrounding Rabaul, the next large island, and an area known as Kavieng. *FeBrina* will head west during certain weather conditions. *FeBrina* ventures farther out to the north and east on regular trips.

The cruising ranges are quite important, since they set the style and tone of each operation. With the most ground to cover, *Star Dancer's* Captain Don Edwards moves the boat frequently, ensuring a complete range of Bismarck Sea diving. On *FeBrina*, Captain Alan Raabe cruises more leisurely and can "sit" on a site for as long as the passengers wish. This makes it perfect for photo groups that are not concerned with exploring but just want to find a good site and shoot. Walindi's Dive Operations Manager, Glenn Barrall, an expert on rare fish species, does cover less ground than the live-aboards but the diving is just as incredible.

For visitors, the travel combinations
(Continued on Page 138)



photos/Lionel Pozzoli



From Walindi Plantation, guests can explore the fascinating diving found just off-shore in the Bismarck Sea.

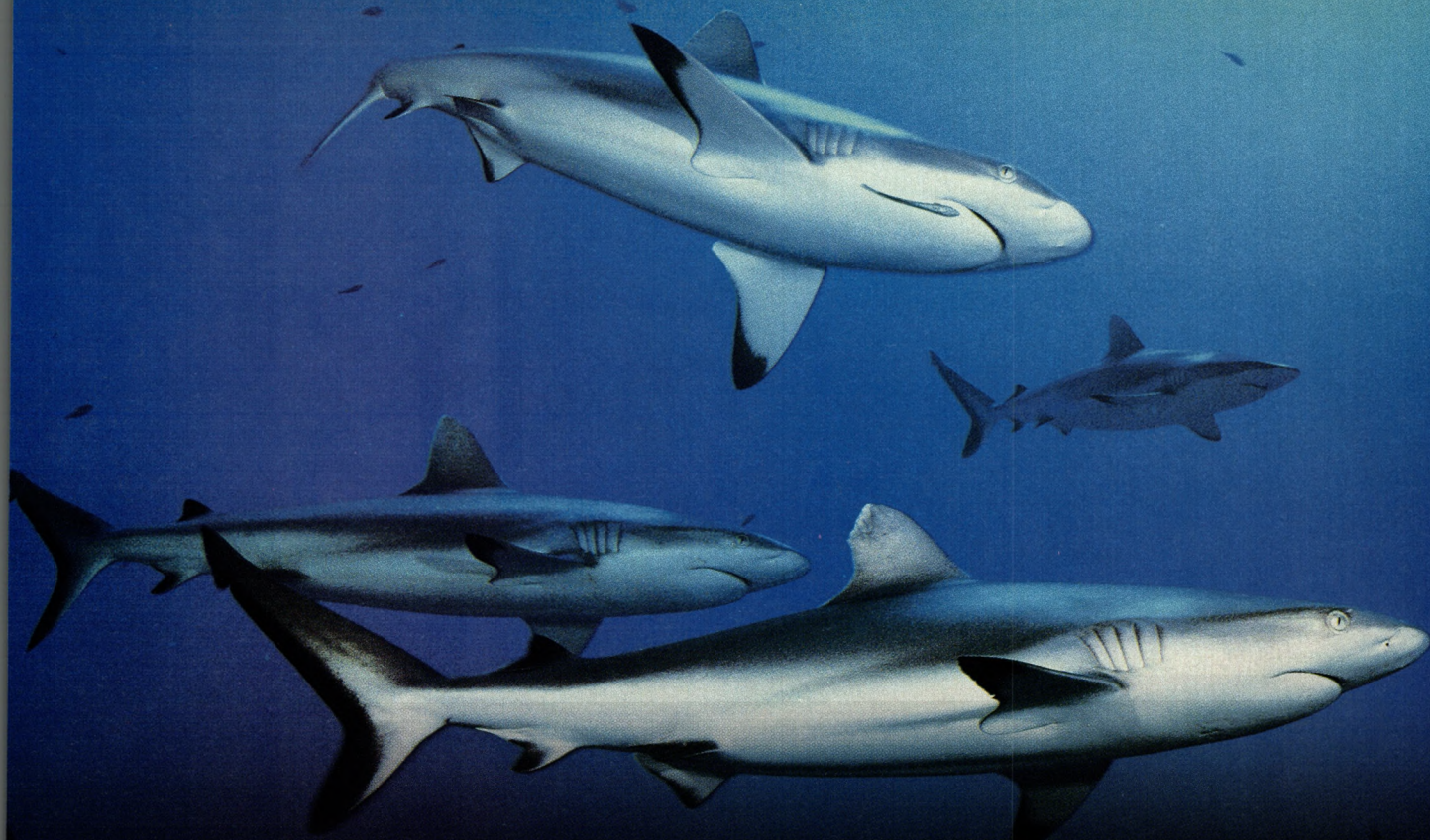


WALINDI PHOTO

Tammy Peluso, longtime SKIN DIVER contributing editor and veteran South Pacific traveler, chose Walindi Plantation for the site of her new business, Walindi Photo. Operations started in June of this year and offer a full range of photo equipment, E-6 processing and specialized photo instruction. Tammy will lead photo tours from the resort and will also make guest appearances on the live-aboards during certain cruises. In addition to custom photo courses, Tammy is available for U/W modeling.

Dates for Tammy's guest appearances:

<i>Star Dancer</i> :	August 2 to 9
<i>FeBrina</i> :	November 17 to 24
<i>Star Dancer</i> :	January 10 to 17, 1998
<i>FeBrina</i> :	April 2 to 9, 1998
<i>Star Dancer</i> :	July 11 to 18, 1998
<i>FeBrina</i> :	Nov. 27 to Dec 4, 1998



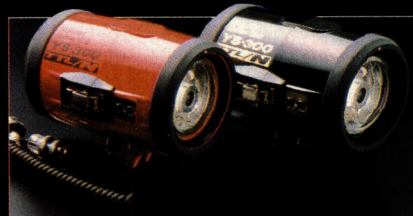
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*This photo: Little Harbour anchorage on Peter Island.
Inset below: A diver swims past a moored charter yacht on the way to a shallow reef off Peter Island.*

Sailing and Diving in Paradise

Rendezvous in the
British Virgin Islands

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL HARRIGAN





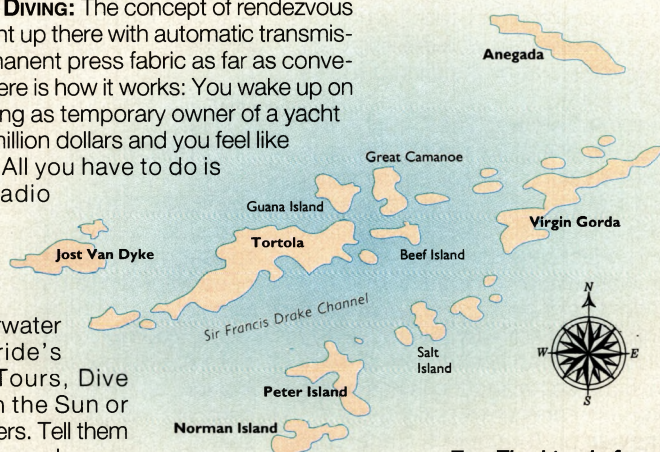
The Bitter End Yacht Club pool, Virgin Gorda.

Is there a diver who doesn't dream of sailing around the world on a luxurious yacht, exploring the world's great dive sites? For many of us, this is our rush hour entertainment, a fantasy we indulge in while stuck in traffic on the way to work.

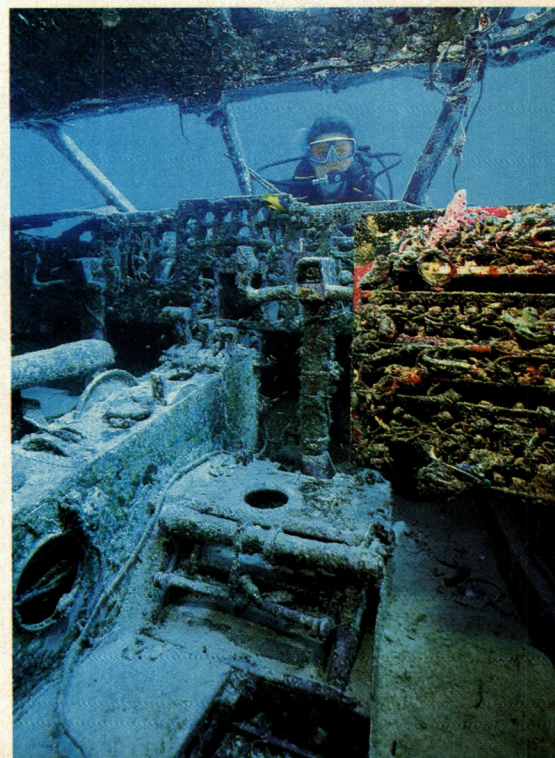
Well, it doesn't have to be a fantasy—in the British Virgin Islands you can sail, dive and play ashore on some of the most perfect tropical islands in any ocean. With possibly the world's largest and most modern fleet of sail and power charter boats, scores of outstanding dive sites and beautiful beachfront resorts, the options are wide open. Stay ashore for part of your vacation and aboard a charter boat for the rest. Spend a week sailing on a dedicated live-aboard dive boat. Or, go straight to your own charter yacht and spend an idyllic week wandering the islands according to your whims. Circumnavigating the globe in search of diving adventure requires a commitment few of us can make, but the BVIs can be crisscrossed easily in a week and offer some truly world-class diving. And, the diving could hardly be easier, thanks to rendezvous service by the BVI dive operators.

RENDEZVOUS DIVING: The concept of rendezvous diving ranks right up there with automatic transmissions and permanent press fabric as far as convenience goes. Here is how it works: You wake up on your first morning as temporary owner of a yacht worth up to a million dollars and you feel like scuba diving. All you have to do is pick up the radio and call one of the rendezvous dive operators, such as Underwater Safaris, Kilbride's Underwater Tours, Dive BVI, Baskin in the Sun or Blue Water Divers. Tell them where you are or where you are going to be and they will arrange a convenient rendezvous. No dive gear? No problem—give them your size and they will bring rental gear for you. If your companions sail while you dive, just let the dive operator know and they can deliver you to the new anchorage after the dive.

Dive instruction is also available on a rendezvous basis. This is particularly true of check-



Top: The drive shaft on the stern section of the RMS Rhone. **Above:** A rendezvous dive boat from Underwater Safaris comes alongside a charter yacht anchored off Peter Island. **Right:** A diver peers into the cockpit of an aircraft at Coral Garden.



Sailing and Diving in the BVI

out dives for a certification course. You can take the academic and pool portions of your course at home and come down to the warm water of the BVIs for the open water dives rather than suffer through them in a cold, murky quarry.

The rendezvous diving concept makes diving and sailing more compatible than ever but there are some practical limits to keep in mind. The British Virgin Islands are serviced by landbased dive operators. Most of the popular anchorages are readily included but there are a few places where you're on your own. Having fresh tanks delivered to your boat by rendezvous is possible but not all of the operators are set up to provide that service.

BVI DIVING: The diving conditions in the British Virgin Islands are as consistently good as you can find anywhere in the world. The visibility is nearly always 60 to 100 feet and frequently as high as 120. On three days out of the last five that I was there, the visibility was in the 100 to 120 foot range. The water temperature is typically between 80 and 84°F, dropping only a few degrees during a brief period in the winter. Thermal protection favored by

divers from about March to December includes shorties, Polartecs, Lycra skins and T-shirts. Shorties and light wetsuits are more comfortable in January and February. The British Virgin Islands are not in the path of any strong ocean currents and the tidal range is fairly small, resulting in diving conditions where strong currents are rare. The conditions on the surface are usually calm, too, because the trade winds are blocked by the mountainous islands, creating protected lees where the water is flat. Most of the diving here is between 20 and 80 feet deep, and many of the most interesting parts are shallower than 60 feet.

The British Virgin Islands are not known for big creature encounters, although even these happen occasionally. During the last year, divers have been lucky enough to swim with Whale Sharks near two of the famous wrecks. What you can expect on every trip is an extraordinary number of fish species and a great deal of variety from site to site. BVI diving runs the full gamut and it will take you more than a week of intense diving to sample it all. More than anything else though, British Virgin Islands diving is a treasure chest for anyone intrigued by reef fish.

Another plus for diving in the British Virgin Islands is the protection afforded by the National Parks Trust Reef Protection Programme, in association with the BVI dive operators. Almost 200 moorings have been installed at prime dive locations throughout the islands. The moorings are of the environmentally sensitive embedded anchor type developed by John Halas at the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, which allow boats to be moored directly over the best spots without damage. Different color buoys have been installed for use by dive operators and charter boats, so potential conflicts are avoided while making it easy for everyone to enjoy the superb snorkeling and diving.

SUPERB SAILING: The British Virgin Islands are one of the best places in the world for sailing. In fact, many sailors would say they are the best place. The reason is these islands are blessed with nearly perfect conditions year-round. The clear, warm water, consistent winds and abundant calm anchorages are ideal for sailing. There are very few hazardous shallows and the islands are all within plain sight, so navigating is easier than finding your car in a mall parking lot.

CREWED OR BAREBOAT: None of the sailing in the British Virgin Islands is difficult—the islands are too close together and the waters too protected for that—but a professional crew does all the work on a crewed charter. All of the charter companies offer this option, usually for their larger boats. For instance, a captain and mate are available on the Moorings

510s, 51 foot Beneteau high performance yachts that sleep up to eight in four separate cabins in addition to the two crew members. What is the advantage of a crewed charter? The crews are nearly all couples with extensive knowledge of the islands and many great ideas for what to do next. You can let them take care of everything, from sailing the

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(809) 494-5774 (fax)

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boat to cooking the meals, while you just relax and have fun. It's like being one of those rich owners but you don't have to actually be rich. When three or four couples share the cost of a crewed charter, the price per person is competitive with many all-inclusive resorts. Another advantage of crewed yachts is that they can be booked by the cabin, so you don't have to charter the entire boat.

"Bareboat" refers to a boat that is chartered without a crew or provisions. You sail it yourself and buy and cook your own food. You don't need to be an expert sailor or have a Coast Guard license to take out a yacht, although you do need to prove to the charter company that you can bring the boat back in one piece. You would probably be surprised at how little experience is sufficient though, and the charter companies are generally willing to do whatever is necessary to build your competence to the proper level. For instance, if you know your way around power boats but you don't have much time sailing, many companies will let you take the boat with a captain for the first couple of days. When the captain is comfortable with your skills, he or she will sign you off to sail the boat yourself. If your experience with

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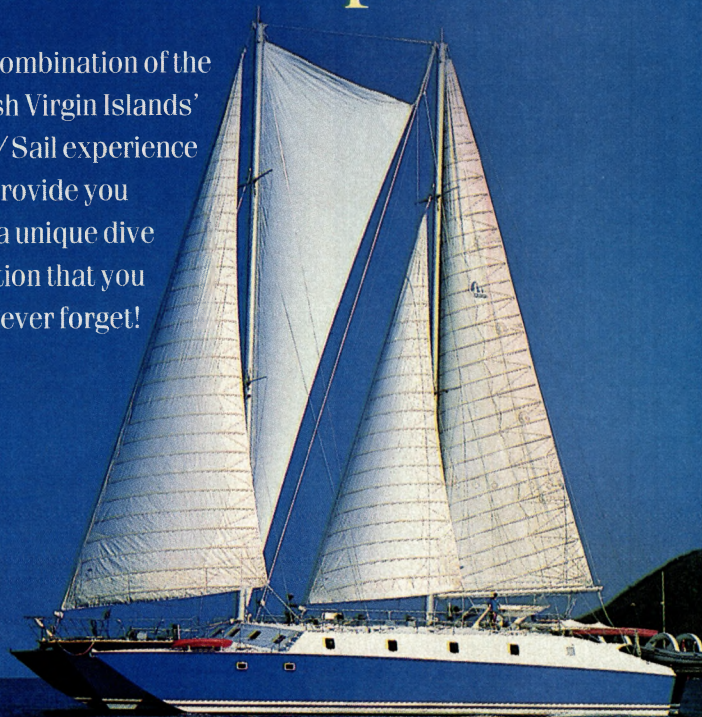
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Photo: Jim Scheiner



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Sailing and Diving in the BVI

boats is very limited, there are learn to sail programs that combine two or three days of sailing school with a regular bareboat charter. The nice thing about this arrangement is that everyone learns at the same time, using the actual boat

that you will sail on your charter.

LIVE-ABOARD SAILING AND DIVING: If you want the definitive combination of big boat sailing and diving, the trimaran *Cuan Law* charts a different course through the British Virgin Islands every week for up to 20 divers in ten spacious and air-conditioned cabins. You'll be pampered on this 105 foot luxury live-aboard, while making up to 18 dives from a pair of custom inflatables. *Promenade* is a 65 foot trimaran that combines a smaller dose of quality diving with all the other attractions of a week long sail. *Promenade's* 20 foot Wellcraft expands the diving horizon without interfering with other activities aboard. *Millennium*, a 55 foot performance catamaran, offers live-aboard dive and sail adventures for up to eight guests. *Millennium* is laid out for privacy and comfort and, like *Promenade*, is a favorite for family charters. All three of these boats offer the kind of exhilarating sailing that only comes from big boats with big rigs. Some of the harder to get to dives, such as the wreck of the **Chikuzen**, the wall at **Drop-Off** and cavern at **Grand Central Station**, are more likely to be reached on these larger live-aboards.

A PERFECT WEEK: Six of us wanted a dive vacation together recently, so we chartered a boat to see how the dive/sail/shore adventure compares to staying ashore or diving on a live-aboard. We came with different expectations about diving. Some wanted to make a couple of dives, some wanted to dive as often as possible and one was not really interested in breathing compressed air at all. We elected to charter a crewed yacht, even though several of us are experienced boaters. It just seemed to free us up for fun, plus nobody wanted to cook. Besides, we had heard the food on the live-aboards and crewed charters was outstanding. Here is how our trip went:

DAY ONE: We went right from the airport to our boat, a 51 foot Beneteau that was only three years old and still sparkled like new. Matt and Christina, our captain and first mate, were great. They seemed to have a sixth sense for when to be part of the group and when to leave us to our own devices. The charter company had already sent us a questionnaire about food, drink and activity preferences, so the boat was already provisioned and ready to go. Each couple had a private stateroom, including a double berth and a bathroom. The salon was large and airy; finished, like the rest of the interior, in lovely varnished wood. On deck, there was plenty of room for all of us to lounge comfortably in the cockpit, which was protected from the sun by a custom Bimini top.

We decided on an easy sail over to Norman Island from Tortola to get things
(Continued on Page 126)

Spoiled Divers... Unspoiled Diving



Tortola,
British Virgin Islands

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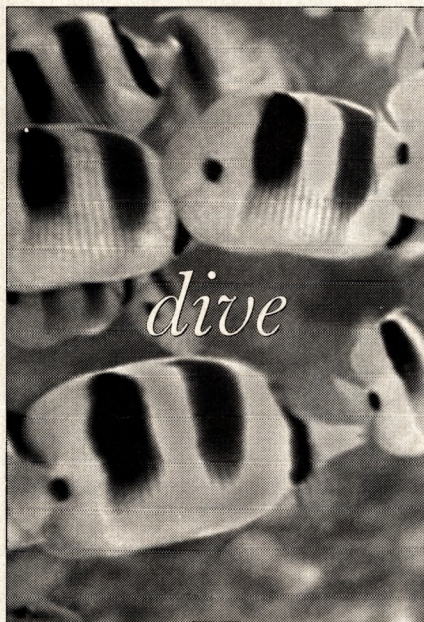
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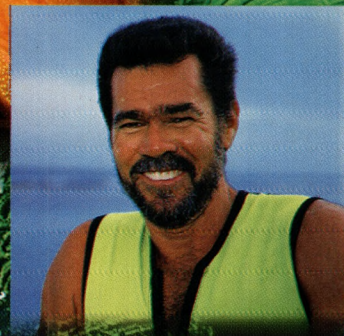


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FeBrina - Papua New Guinea



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Why Book a Peter Hughes Liveaboard?

- **Peter Hughes Diving sets the standard in Liveaboard Luxury** - with first class features like spacious air-conditioned cabins with ensuite facilities, morning coffee service, and sit down dining with full course meals, a Peter Hughes Liveaboard offers an incomparable luxury dive experience. You'll appreciate thoughtful extras such as warm towels and freshly baked treats after your dive, complimentary robes and toiletries, fresh linens and nightly turn-down service.
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RED SEA

Moon Dancer on the Red Sea

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Moon Dancer - Red Sea

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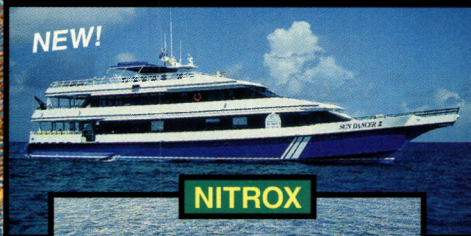
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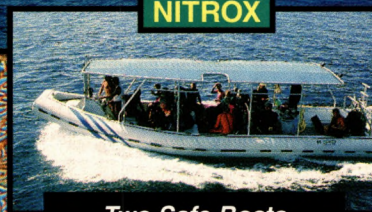
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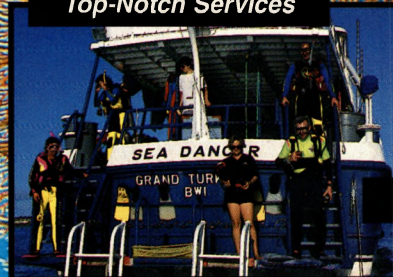
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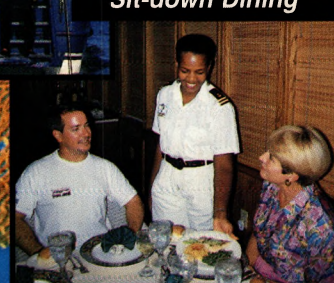
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Dive Notes

FIRST WOMAN TO SKIPPER THE SCUBA-DREW ON LAKE MEAD: Patricia M. Bodin, PADI divemaster, satisfactorily completed testing for her U.S. Coast Guard master's license, which allows her to pilot passenger vessels with more than six passenger. According to National Park Service records and local park concessionaires, Bodin is the first woman to have obtained this USCG rating and operated a commercial vessel within the National Park Recreational area. She operates the *Scubadrew* on Lake Mead and the *Spectrum* on the Colorado River, 45 miles outside of Las Vegas, Nevada. The *Scubadrew* is a 28 foot custom dive boat built by Canaveral Custom Boats in Florida and the first USCG certified dive boat to operate in the inland waters region of the southwest. The *Spectrum* is a 24 foot pontoon dive boat, ideal for the Colorado River drift diving conditions.

Pat's husband, Drew Bodin, is also a USCG captain and PADI divemaster. Together they own and operate Drew's Dam Divers, Inc. With their latest purchase of the *Scubadrew*, they can now accommodate up to 15 divers on Lake Mead. They schedule dive charters on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, however a group of divers may book a charter for any day, if coordinated in advance.

Charters include tanks, weights and weightbelts. Beverages and a light lunch are provided. Lake Mead can accommodate beginner through advanced divers, while the Colorado River is a drift dive, recommended for advanced divers.

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Rates on *Wind Dancer* for these two weeks are discounted 20 percent and there is a \$300 surcharge for the clinic. Space is limited so call (800) 9-DANCER, check out the Web site at <http://www.peterhughes.com> or e-mail dancer@peterhughes.com.

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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY RICK FREHSEE



I am gliding along effortlessly in water as warm as blood and clear as crystal. The nearly invisible water allows me to visualize the continuous spine of coral peaks as a flight of fantasy: It is as if I were a kind of aquatic Superman flying over the Grand Canyon, only instead of birds, there are fishes flitting about.

I look over my shoulder and find my dive buddy exactly where I knew he would be. That kind of mental telepathy, of knowing exactly where your partner is during any moment of the dive, comes with a lot of experience.

That is what I share with Juan Leca, instructor, dive operator and 20 year veteran of Cozumel diving.

Juan and I are on a kind of dive holiday; actually I am on a photographic assignment and Juan is using this as an opportunity for an adventure. An adventure is exactly what we are experiencing; the second day of diving on a new site we have discovered between the traditional dive sites of Tormentos and Chancanab reefs.

Now I am at 100 feet, feeling not a hint of a nitrogen buzz, owing to the 32 percent enriched air mixture (nitrox) I am breathing. That and an increase in bottom times are the advantages over plain air; the increased responsibility is a very strict depth limitation. The current pushes us along at about three-quarters of a knot—a good ride for decent sightseeing. After about five minutes of gliding along a lackluster ledge nearly devoid of large sponges and corals, the wall turns inshore and **El Castillo**—the castle—appears. It is incredible in decoration and nearly unbelievable in size, a huge wall, nearly vertical, sometimes undercut and as long as a football

field. It begins at about 100 feet and plummets, it would appear, to infinity. A diver in the Caribbean, especially in a popular place such as Cozumel, will rarely find a coral landscape so absolutely pristine. Beneath the ledges at the start of the wall are giant buff tube sponges, some very symmetrical and others bent into weird shapes by the current. Some scenes are truly mesmerizing—oversized sponges and soft and hard corals billowing into floral bouquets and fantasy shapes. Schools of chromis and wrasse hover above, reminiscent of a butterfly invasion of a flower garden.

Juan and I dip into calm water beneath the first ledge to study the scenery in detail. Usually a scene this complex and diverse is associated with Indo-Pacific reefs. Here, in Cozumel, is one of the richest underwater scenes in the Caribbean.

At the end of El Castillo, the wall rises to a coral mound that falls to a sandy shelf on the shallow side. In a vertical fissure along the mound is one of the largest Orange Elephant Ear Sponges I have ever seen. Roughly oval in shape, it is 10 to 12 feet high and nearly that wide—the king of sponges on the king of walls along Cozumel's nearly continuous drop-off.

Moving out from the coral mound, we join the current again to resume our adventure looking for another oasis of corals and sponges. Few things identify Cozumel as well as the Yucatan current,

which affects the island to some degree 365 days a year. This current, which originates in the west-central Caribbean, is a biological blessing, a kind of soup washing nutrients and plankton over the reef. The concentration is actually thin but the volume of water flowing by the reefs is great, providing nourishment without affecting visibility. So, besides providing transportation for divers, the current provides a constant food source for the reef and great visibility. In fact, the current washes the reef clean of any disturbed sand and discourages divers from contact with the bottom. Not a bad situation for a reef system that has been popular with divers for nearly 30 years.

The ride the current provides for divers is really the essential difference between Cozumel and nearly every other major Caribbean dive destination. For experienced divers, the current is a hoot. Drop in and exit at the right place and, in between, you have seen a tremendous stretch of reef. There have been dives where we have covered one-quarter to one-half mile of reef, all nearly effortlessly. You learn to play the current essentially like a glider or hang glider pilot plays the winds spilling off a mountain or flowing along a canyonside.

Juan and I essentially ride the current the same way, with an eye out for the next potentially great underwater photograph. We ride in the sea wind more or less in a flared-out position to gain all its energy. Occasionally we will even speed up with a kick of our fins in the direction of the current. Then, as an interesting ledge, a decorated coral spire or a colorful school of fish appears, we will move closer to the reef and seek shelter in the lee of a coral head or ledge. Recently, toward the northern end of the island, we used this technique with great success as we discovered several sea turtles sleeping in ledges on the top of the wall. Once the pictures are taken, we move out from the reef and rejoin the current, continuing our



Above: Schooling *Margates* shimmer and flash as they sweep past. **Below:** A Spiny Lobster looks as if its departure is imminent. **Left:** Mexicana Airlines serves Cozumel from several gateway cities throughout the U.S.



A diver explores a deeper portion of El Castillo Wall, Cozumel's newest dive site.

COZUMEL

journey. In this way, each dive is a discovery; you never know exactly where you are dropping in on a site or exactly where you will end up. Not so incidentally, the boat follows from above, tracking bubbles (on calm days) or following a buoy towed by a divemaster.

The Cozumel current makes macro photography a challenge and requires a new plan for shore diving. But successful close-ups can be taken in a lee behind the reef or in little current close to shore, without lying on or in the corals. And shore diving, which is fairly popular in Cozumel, can be planned with entry and exit areas defined. One merely has to arrange for a vehicle at the exit point.

Under ideal circumstances, Cozumel current diving is so relaxing there is little or no aerobic benefit to scuba diving. But dive poorly and challenge the current and you will have to work like an Olympic athlete. To the uninitiated, current diving can be intimidating. To the ignorant or foolish, it can turn a

holiday dive into a nightmare. There is all the difference in the world between diving the popular reef stretch between town and Punta Sur and diving at the northern or southern ends of Cozumel. Along the island there are plenty of boats and, if you are in good shape, by swimming perpendicular to the current, you could

reach shore. At the southern tip of the island, the current often splits and is unpredictable. At the northern end, it is even worse, usually picking up speed and moving away from shore. Additional experience and precautions are mandated here. Fortunately, most established dive operators in Cozumel are experts in knowing where, when and how to dive the 30 or so most popular sites along the island.

WHAT YOU WILL SEE: Wonderful things appear constantly before the eyes of the diver in Cozumel. The underwater environment presents a complete selection of stony corals, gorgonians, sponges and an assortment of marine fishes and other invertebrates. In addition to the clear Yucatan current, Cozumel's ocean waters are kept crystal owing to the absence of rivers on Cozumel and the near absence of outflow along the limestone-based Yucatan peninsula, 12 miles away. The 32 by 10 mile island is mostly beaches, parched ironshore and dry, scrub forest. Rain, when it does fall, is usually in brief showers. Water temperatures vary from a low of about 77°F in February to a high of about 84°F in August and September.

Marine life is generally excellent,



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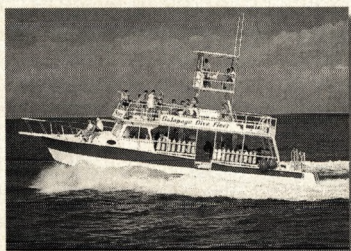
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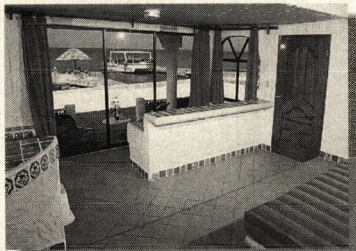
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COZUMEL

with numerous pockets of schooling fishes found along the reef, a generous selection of colorful reef tropicals and fairly frequent encounters with pelagics and schools along the outer reefs. Cozumel does not have an abundance of massive shallow reefs. Most snorkeling is done close to shore, because of the current, and along low patch or striated reefs. An exception is **Colombia Shallows** at the southern end of Cozumel but this is a

long boat run. Night diving is popular and offers a good chance to find an octopus or Spiny Lobster out and about. An unfortunate circumstance has been the recent "sacrifice" of Paraiso Reef, a popular night dive site, owing to the building of the new cruise ship pier. This occurred even in the face of the island government's professed dedication to environmentalism. Compromises are sometimes necessary but hopefully this will be the last reef that will have to succumb to Cozumel's continuing development.

The real and constant attraction in Cozumel diving is along or just off the

"wall," a nearly continuous shelf that parallels the island's western coastline for 20 miles. Here, coral spires and pinnacles billow off the white sand floor, creating sea castles and strange labyrinths to explore. Even very experienced Caribbean divers are generally thrilled with the size of Cozumel's towering corals and the maze of fissures and caverns penetrating the reefs. Names such as **Palancar**, **Santa Rosa** and **Punta Sur** are world renowned as underwater spectacles. There are specific attractions to encounter, such as the schooling fish atop **Tormentos Reef** and the yellow sponge forming a cross in a cave at Punta Sur. But, just like our newly discovered dive site mentioned at the beginning of this article, true adventure can be found anywhere along the Cozumel reef tract. I much prefer to chase conditions, allowing the divemaster to determine the dive site according to the current and visibility.

IN SEARCH OF THE SPLENDID TOADFISH:

Of all the special critters and encounters in Cozumel, one stands out as the island's signature marine life. The Splendid Toadfish (also known as the Resplendent Toadfish or Cozumel Toadfish) is nearly indigenous to Cozumel, although some specimens are found along the coast of the Yucatan and even a few have been sighted in Belize. It can be said that the Splendid is the most beautiful of the Caribbean Toadfish, that is, it is the prettiest of the ugly fishes. Its body is lined with black and white zebra stripes. The Splendid is particularly royal looking with its pectoral fins flared, revealing their splash of yellow color.

Splendid Toadfish aren't difficult to find. Nearly all (except on night dives) are found in holes or under ledges, comfortably wedged in and at a safe distance from the opening. They are pugnacious and often aggressive. Hold a snorkel tip close to the entrance of their lair and they will often bite at it or push sand out at you.

The trick for photographers is to find a fairy mellow toadfish. This will probably occur in every one out of six animals. When this happens, you will be rewarded by a toadfish that will protrude several inches from the opening of its lair and sit up on its pectorals, seemingly undaunted or oblivious to the presence of diver, camera or strobe.

WHERE TO STAY, WHERE TO DIVE: The only thing vaguely difficult about Cozumel lodging or diving is the possibilities, which are nearly endless and run from the nearly primitive to the almost opulent. Every style and class of lodging is available in Cozumel. These include full service luxury hotels and "name brand" beach resorts, stunning Caribbean villas, quaint Mexi-Maya hotels, all-inclusive resorts, dedicated dive resorts and apartment/condo rentals. Guestrooms are of-

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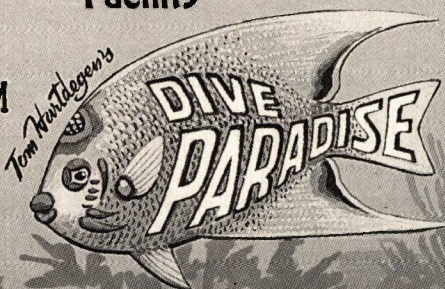
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ten on the beach and nearly all are air-conditioned. Most large and mid-sized hotels also offer phones, cable TV and often mini-bars and individual patios. Many suites and condos offer a kitchen or kitchenette. Most hotels have bars and restaurants and offer meal packages. AP, MAP and EP packages are popular as Cozumel features a staggering variety of restaurants. Most major hotels provide large freshwater pools, in-house dive operators, fax, travel desk, concierge and transportation rentals. Very popular at Cozumel hotels are theme nights, shows and special dinners. Generally speaking, the farther south the hotel, the shorter the boat run to the popular reefs. But this might be offset by other advantages, such as being closer to town.

According to someone's latest account, there are more than 60 dive operators currently on Cozumel but only a dozen or so come quickly to mind. The only regulation for dive operators on the island is competition; it is basically a wide open business. The criteria for selecting an operator should be based on affiliations, recommendations, reputation, experience and longevity. Some operators have fleets of boats, established bases of operations, an extensive professional staff and 10 or more years in the business. This, along with personal scrutiny, should determine who you should dive with. In Cozumel, it is not unusual to be staying at a hotel and diving with an operator not directly affiliated with that hotel. Several dive operators near or close to town pick up divers on hotel piers all along the waterfront twice daily on their way to the popular southern reefs.

Nearly every kind of diving and boat schedule can be found on Cozumel (as well as nearly every kind of dive boat). Very early morning dives, morning dives, late morning dives, afternoon, twilight and night dives are offered daily, with one or two tanks per trip. Big "social boats," fast V-hulled cruisers, flattops, catamarans and yacht-style dive boats can be found. Some operators make it a point to segregate divers on boats according to experience levels. PADI, NAUI, SSI, etc., standards are usually rigidly kept and, except for snorkelers from the cruise ships, there is an aversion to "cattle boats." Most mid-sized boats in Cozumel go out with 12 to 16 divers. Very popular are the 20 to 25 foot outboard six pack (six passenger) boats usually chartered by experienced divers. Diving in this reputed "mañana-land" is actually quite organized and usually on schedule. The exception is the "party boat," usually chartered to a 16 to 25 person dive group that is seemingly on its own schedule.

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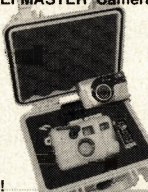
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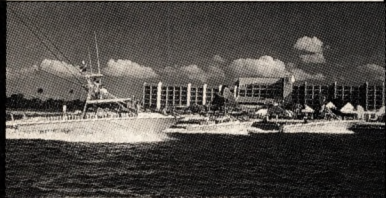
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several custom video services normally booked through your dive operator and a full service photo/video center.

AROUND THE ISLAND: Still comparatively small, San Miguel is a former fishing village that, during the past 30 years, has sprung into a tourist town. Today, San Miguel seems to be in the thrashes and throws of a decision whether to remain quaint or turn commercial. As a result, it is actually both; the layout still adheres to a small colonial town with a *parque central* (central park) and a grid pattern of restaurants and storefronts, complete with a watch tower and two churches.

In addition to the considerable charm of architecture and layout, you are "slam-dunked" with more than 200 gift shops peddling both trash and treasure, and more bars and restaurants than you can visit in a year. There are also several recognizable U.S. chain fast food eateries along the beach strip. That said, there are also many charming seafood, Mexican and specialty restaurants and more than a few boutique shops offering crafts and jewelry. Little white taxis are everywhere and fares are reasonable. There is the Calling Station in town that offers phone and fax service. If you are interested in the island's environment and culture, don't miss the Cozumel Museum downtown.

A really nice excursion is to rent a Jeep and tour the island, which can include wilderness white sand beaches, thick stands of tropical dry forest, rugged iron-shore coastline, several small ancient Maya sites (San Gervasio is the largest and most impressive), beachside restaurants and cantinas, and the picturesque Celarin Lighthouse at the southwest tip of the island. If you have time to venture farther, Cozumel ferryboats depart the town pier for the mainland tourist village of Playa del Carmen every half hour from before dawn to after sunset. There are also daily trips to Tulum, Koba and Chichen Itza—major Maya sites on the mainland.

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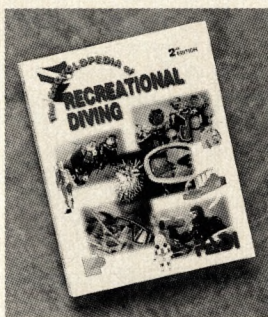
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Dive Notes

PADI's NEW, REVISED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RECREATIONAL DIVING: The Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) recently introduced a new, second edition of its popular *Encyclopedia of*



Recreational Diving. This comprehensive resource includes more than 300 pages of dive related information, including coverage of emerging

technologies, U/W geography, environmental awareness and careers in diving.

The Second Edition *Encyclopedia of Recreational Diving* has been revised throughout to reflect the latest information and technology. Divers from beginning to professional levels can benefit from the encyclopedia's in-depth coverage of topics such as The Chemistry and Physics of Diving, The Physiology of Diving, Dive Equipment, The Aquatic Realm and The Future of Diving. The user-friendly reference guide features hundreds of illustrations, photos, diagrams and charts.

The Second Edition *Encyclopedia of Recreational Diving* is printed on chlorine-free, recyclable paper in an effort to support the environment and PADI's Project AWARE.

For more information, or to purchase the new Second Edition *Encyclopedia of Recreational Diving*, contact a local PADI Dive Center or Resort. 🐠

CAPTAIN SLATE'S ATLANTIS DIVE CENTER UPDATE: Capt. Slate's Atlantis Dive Center in Key Largo, Florida, has now opened a watersports concession and dive center at the Key Largo Howard Johnson's Resort. Atlantis Watersports offers parasailing, waverunners, banana rides, sunset cruises, boat rentals, snorkeling, diving and glassbottom boat tours daily.

Capt. Slate's has also added a complete Travel Agency service in-house. With just one call, its professional travel agent, Layna, can take care of all your needs, including air travel, rental cars, hotels and any other type of travel you desire to any location.

For more information or to book your next Key Largo "Wet Vacation" call Atlantis at (800) 331-3483, (305) 451-1325, (305) 451-3020 or e-mail CaptSlate@aol.com. 🐠

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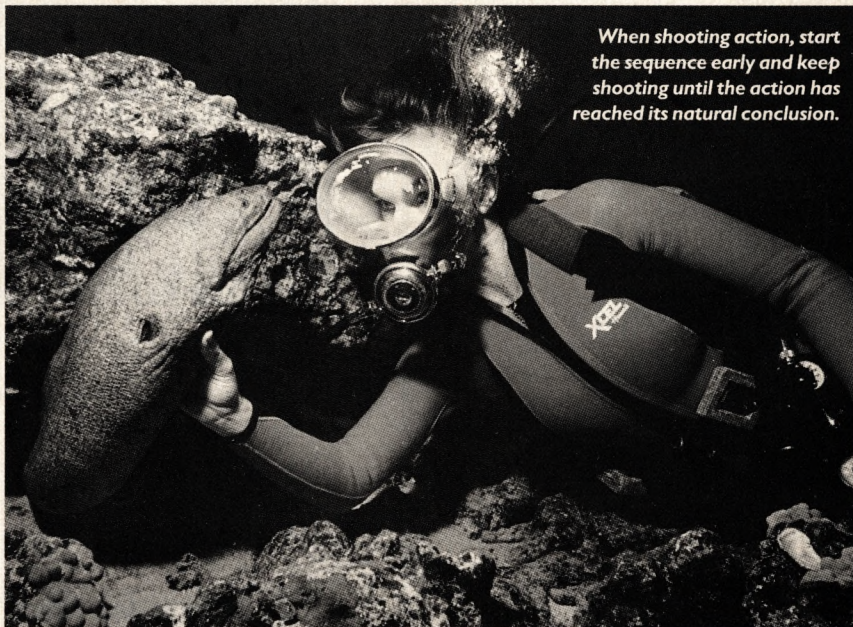
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VIDEO COURSE

Improving Your Shots



When shooting action, start the sequence early and keep shooting until the action has reached its natural conclusion.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM CHURCH

In the last lesson we discussed the three main video shots: the long shot (LS), medium shot (MS) and close-up (CU).

The LS established location and conditions and provided transitions and endings. The MS moved in to feature something of interest in the wide view LS and the CU pinpointed the action. One commonly used sequence of shots is the LS, MS, CU and LS. In this lesson, let's concentrate on improving individual shots.

PLANNING YOUR SHOTS:

Beginners often begin shooting before they begin thinking. They don't have a strong subject, haven't thought about what shot (LS, MS or CU) they should use, how they will end it or what the next shot will be. Before beginning a shot (or a series of related shots), think through each of the following questions:

1. What is your subject?
2. How will you start the shot—LS, MS or CU?
3. When will you start and end the shot?

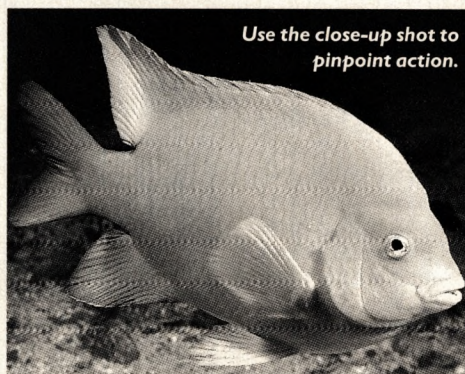
4. What is the subject for your next shot?

Question #3 is often the hardest to answer. Divers swim into your camera's view, change their minds and leave. Fish do what you wanted them to only after you stop shooting. Shooting a still photo-

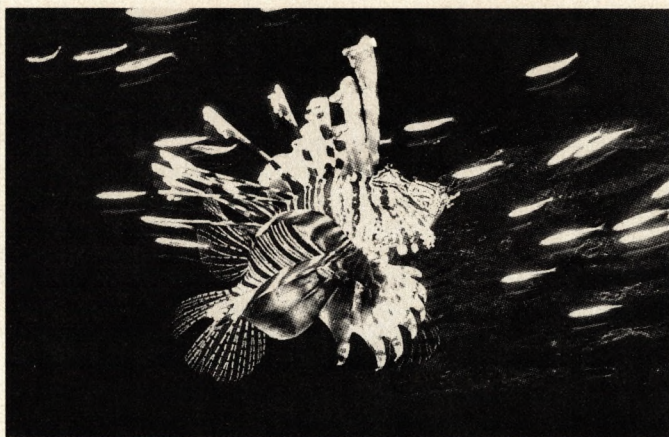
grapher at work can be exasperating. You think the photographer is about to take a picture, you begin filming and the photographer takes forever to compose the shot. No sooner do you give up and stop shooting when—whamo!

—the strobe flashes. If you are shooting action, start early and keep shooting until you get a natural ending.

PLAN YOUR ZOOMS: Beginning underwater videographers often zoom erratically from shot to shot—LS to MS to CU—while shooting. The resulting footage is often painful to watch. If you must zoom while shooting, try gliding in for an LS to MS. I usually turn the camera off, zoom to the new image size and then



Use the close-up shot to pinpoint action.



When shooting the action of a fish, let it move around in your frame—don't follow its every movement.

start shooting again. When working close, the smoothest way to zoom is to move your camera in closer, rather than fumble with the zoom control.

PLAN YOUR PANS: Panning means moving the camera to show a wide area. Underwater, you can pan horizontally, vertically or diagonally. (Topside, panning refers to horizontal movement. Underwater, I broaden the definition to include any movement.) A pan shot can take the viewer from one area to another or show a panoramic view. Most beginners pan too quickly and in a random manner. Here are a few suggestions for panning:

1. Pan from one subject to another. For example, follow descending divers from the surface to a shallow bottom or pan to show the expanse of a shipwreck or reef.

2. Avoid the indecisive pan. Once you start a pan shot, don't back up if you miss an important subject. Finish the pan and then go back to the subject. (Unless the new subject is a must have shot.)

3. When panning with a swimming subject, follow its general direction, not its every movement.

4. If a close-up subject, such as a juvenile Spotted Drum, is moving within a small area, don't follow its movements.

Let the subject swim in and out of frame and around in the picture area.

5. Don't pan unless you have a reason.

THE GOLDEN RULE: The golden rule is simple: Change image size (LS to MS or CU), camera angle or both whenever you start a new shot. Changing camera angle implies action and motion, even with non-moving subjects. To see how this works, watch the constantly changing image sizes and angles in TV commercials.

SHOT LENGTH: If you plan to edit later, start shooting several seconds before the action begins and leave the camera running several seconds after the action ends. This gives you some "editing space" and keeps you from missing important action. Select the best footage while editing. In the final edit, don't use shots longer than about 12 seconds unless you have an action sequence or a unique subject.

If you are editing in camera, remember there will be a slight delay between the time you trigger the record mechanism and the time the camcorder starts recording. Thus, start your shots early. Don't stop shooting too soon—let the diver or fish exit the scene. If you want a long view of a sedentary subject, use several shots taken at slightly different angles rather than a single long shot. 🐟

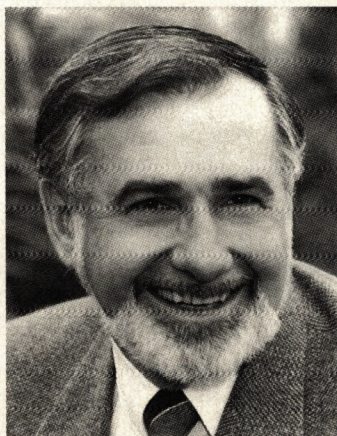
Paul Tzimoulis Receives DEMA's Reaching Out Award

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE CARDONE

Paul J. Tzimoulis, SKIN DIVER Magazine's Executive Publisher, has received the prestigious Reaching Out Award. Presented annually by the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA) at its annual trade show, the award recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to scuba diving. It is considered the sport's Hall of Fame. Also receiving awards this year were author/cinematographer, Hans Hass, who traveled the world in diving's earliest years, documenting what he saw in books and films; and Joe Dorsey, pioneer East Coast dive store owner.

The recipients of this award form a very select group of diving's elite. Among the past winners are legendary French undersea environmentalist, Jacques-Yves Cousteau; star of the *Sea Hunt* TV series, actor Lloyd Bridges; astronaut/aquonaut Scott Carpenter; and University of Maryland professor *emeritus*, Dr. Eugenie Clark, known as "The Shark Lady."

The contributions made by Tzimoulis span a 40 year period. He began diving in 1953; was one of the first scuba instructors (1956); opened and owned one of the first dive



stores (East Haven, Connecticut, 1957); and was one of the first sponge divers to use mobile, lightweight scuba instead of the traditional heavy hardhat gear (1958). He subsequently worked for two large dive equipment companies, U.S. Divers (1960) and Sportsways (1962).

In his free time, Tzimoulis was becoming an accomplished wreck diver and one of the world's first underwater photographers. He co-authored a book, *Camera Below*, in 1968. Over the years, Tzimoulis' articles and photographs in SKIN DIVER have introduced legions of divers to the wonders of tropical destinations worldwide. (His Reaching Out Award recognizes this aspect of his career, it is for The Arts.)

Tzimoulis joined the staff of SKIN DIVER in 1964 as Eastern Sales Representative and Associate Editor. Two years later he became Publisher and Editor of the magazine, which was founded in 1951.

During his 33 years at the magazine's helm, SKIN DIVER has grown from an obscure fringe publication with a circulation of

(Continued on Page 159)

Sailing and Diving in the BVI

(Continued from Page 114)

underway. What a feeling to sit behind the wheel of that boat as it cut cleanly through the water! Our first stop was at the caves on Treasure Point, the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's classic *Treasure Island*. Matt moored the boat and then took us over by dinghy to snorkel in the caves. The shallow caves were filled with swirling Silversides and Copper Sweepers flashing brightly in the rays of afternoon sun.

Christina was taking fresh cookies out of the oven when we returned and we worked our way through the warm stack as we sailed to Little Harbour on Peter Island. Anchored close to shore for the evening, we watched a dozen or so pelicans dive bombing for fish and decided to snorkel over to observe the action. They were hitting dense schools of Silversides in about four feet of water.

DAY TWO: Right on time, the Underwater Safaris dive boat pulled alongside for our first rendezvous dive. We quickly transferred our gear, took a brief moment for the paperwork and we were on our way to **Painted Walls**. Three minicanyons cut into Dead Chest Island at this site, with vertical walls literally covered with red, yellow, brown and green sponges and encrusting corals. The third canyon is the longest and ends with a swim-through that leads into a shallow pool. Pillar Coral, Brain Coral and many soft corals grow prolifically outside the canyons, where divers often come across Nurse Sharks and turtles.

For our second dive we made a leisurely run past Pelican Island to the distinctive rock formations of **The Indians**. We started the dive on the south side of The Indians, eventually making our way around the rocks to a point where we could cross a shallow lagoon and exit through a narrow swim-through back to the boat. The reef varies from encrusting corals on the tall slab side of the rock to big boulders of Star and Brain Coral on the level bottom.

After a short sail to Cooper Island, we moored opposite another fantastic beach for lunch. We were still ready for more diving, so we called for another rendezvous. This time Blue Water Divers was able to pick up us for a dive on the **RMS Rhone**. This is definitely one of the best wreck dives in the world. As is often the case, the conditions were ideal. Visibility was easily 120 feet and there was only a very light current. Built in 1865, the *Rhone* was 310 feet long and was one of the first commercial vessels designed with a propeller. Disaster struck only two years later,

when the *Rhone* was broken apart on Black Rock Point during a vicious hurricane. The remarkably intact bow section lies on the sand in about 75 feet, while the stern section is scattered in shallower water. After the dive we sailed across Sir Francis Drake Channel to Trellis Bay where we dined watching the sun slide into the golden sea.

DAY THREE: After a gourmet breakfast we recrossed the channel to Virgin Gorda, mooring at **The Baths**. It's easy to see why this site is world famous, with its startling combination of smooth sand beach and giant granite boulders. We were happy to learn that it is one of 15 national parks in the British Virgin Islands, so it is protected from overuse and development. The unusual boulders are thought to have been formed about 70 million years ago and raised from the seabed by volcanic action sometime later. Once exposed, the wind and sea took over, gradually smoothing them into the round shape that they have now. Keith made sure we brought sneakers ashore and we needed them for climbing over and under the rocks. We even hiked down the shore to Devil's Bay, another park area where we snorkeled and relaxed on the beach.

We left The Baths and headed to North Sound. After mooring, we took the dinghy to shore and got a ride to the base of Gorda Peak so we could hike the trail to the top. The panoramic view was gorgeous. We could see across the rocky island of Fallen Jerusalem all the way to Tortola. For a change of pace we had dinner ashore and then retired to the boat.

DAY FOUR: Since we were moored opposite the Bitter End Yacht Club, three of us dinghied over to dive with Kilbride's Underwater Tours while the others walked the Trail of Palms on Mosquito Island and snorkeled. We made two dives with Kilbride's, at **Coral Gardens** and **The Chimney**. Coral Gardens is a relaxing dive along a sloping reef bordering a level sand bottom. The fuselage of a Shorts aircraft sunk several years ago marks the turnaround point. The Chimney is another BVI dive that shouldn't be missed. In addition to a nice reef, there is a section where you pass through a shoulder width slot, the chimney, into a large cavern open at the top and then into a round tunnel leading out the other side.

Then it was on to Salt Island for another dive on the *Rhone*.

DAY FIVE: After overnighting in Great Harbour we sailed to Sandy Cay near Jost Van Dyke to snorkel and sunbathe, then doubled back to the old pirate's anchorage at Soper's Hole. While half of our party went ashore to shop and sightsee at West End, the rest of us called upon Baskin in the Sun for another rendezvous dive. They took us to a new spot called **Little Thatch** that has some of the most

untouched coral we've seen. We reached the bottom of the reef slope at about 60 feet and spent the rest of the dive working our way back up to 15 feet, with lush coral and loads of fish all the way.

DAY SIX: We thought we had seen great beaches on this trip but Cane Garden Bay tops them all. After playing ashore for hours, we let Matt and Christina sit back while we sailed the boat past Frenchman's Cay to our first night's anchorage on Peter Island.

DAY SEVEN: Back to Road Town. For the last week we had dived, snorkeled, sailed, hiked, ate and, yes, shopped until we were exhausted. Fortunately, we were booked at the Treasure Isle Hotel on Tortola so we could relax ashore before we returned home. During dinner we decided we would have to come back for another trip. After all, we had only been to a fraction of the 50 or so islands and we had missed so many great dive spots. We hadn't hiked to the top of Sage Mountain or bicycled around Tortola. We may need more than just one more week!

TRAVEL INFORMATION

The easiest way to Tortola is through San Juan, Puerto Rico. American Airlines flies to San Juan from many U.S. cities, with American Eagle flights on to Tortola. U.S. and Canadian citizens can enter the British Virgin Islands with either a passport or a certified birth certificate and a photo ID. The U.S. dollar is the official currency and electrical power is likewise to U.S. standards. Dress, especially aboard boats, is extremely casual. However, bare midriffs or bare chests are not appropriate in town.

For more information about diving and sailing in the British Virgin Islands, contact the BVI Tourist Board at (800) 835-8530 or fax (212) 949-8254. 

TECHNIFACTS

(Continued from Page 30)

The dramatic 1947 salvage of the cargo of the *Diamond Knot* was also filmed in 16mm color with technically accurate narration. The U/W portions of the film were presented by scientifically correct animated drawings. Copies of the film and of the 30 page booklet may again become available.

THE WRECK THAT ISN'T

Many people believe the *Mary Celeste* was wrecked. Such is not the case. The *Mary Celeste* became a mystery on December 4, 1872, when the *De Gratia* found her adrift in the Atlantic. Her crew and passengers had deserted her without a trace. The *Mary Celeste* was towed into port and eventually put back in service.

Of the five insurance companies that insured the vessel and her cargo, only one remains, the Atlantic Mutual Insurance

TECHNIFACTS

Company of New York. They had written *Insurance on Freight on Charter*. On the 100th anniversary of the company, in 1942, they published a 14 page booklet titled *The Mary Celeste; The Odyssey of an Abandoned Ship*. This small booklet may also become available.

Readers are invited to send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to E. R. Cross, c/o Technifacts, SKIN DIVER Magazine, 6420 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90048-5515 with a request for information on both the *Diamond Knot* and the *Mary Celeste*.

There are more than one million wrecks in the waters of the world. In future issues of Technifacts many of the major wrecks will be reviewed. Stay with us and become one of the world's best wreck divers—from your armchair. 

Dive Notes

KONA AGGRESSOR II FIRST HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE LIVE-ABOARD: Last July, Aggressor Fleet invited two handicapped divers to evaluate the *Kona Aggressor II* and determine its accessibility to divers with disabilities. One diver was a paraplegic who works for the Handicapped Scuba Association (HSA) and the other was an upper extremities amputee.

Four days were spent diving and it was learned that the boat was quite accessible with minor modification. The catamaran design allows for more activities on each level, reducing the need to go from one level to the other. When that need does arise, the boat is equipped with a lifting device to assist wheelchair divers.

The showers have been redesigned, allowing the shower head to be raised and lowered. A seat is also available in each shower stall. Throughout the boat round door knobs were replaced with levers that will accommodate a diver with upper extremity prosthetics.

These modifications, as well as special handicapped diver course certifications, have earned the *Kona Aggressor II* an HSA Five Star rating. It is the first and only live-aboard to receive such a distinction. The new *Fiji Aggressor* is being built with similar features and will also receive a Five Star rating upon completion.

Captain James Hudgens is now a certified HSA Buddy Instructor and an HSA Dive Instructor. This training allows him to certify fellow *Kona Aggressor* crew members as HSA Dive Buddies.

For more information about Aggressor Fleet vessels, call (800) 348-2628. 

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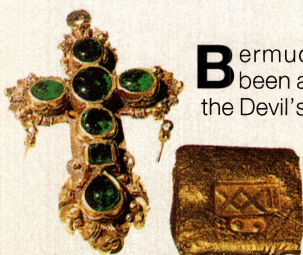
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Bermuda's Golden Ring of Wrecks

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY



Bermuda has always been associated with the Devil's Triangle—that region of the Western Atlantic where many ships and planes have mysteriously vanished. Yet, there is another phenomenon even more fascinating—Bermuda's Golden Ring of Wrecks. While the Triangle involves lost ships, the ring encompasses a region of found ships, or to be more specific—shipwrecks.

A RING OF WRECKS

Bermuda is unique among tropical islands. It is the only island completely encircled by shipwrecks—and the only island that offers such a fantastic array of diveable wrecks, spanning four centuries and 15 countries.

Since the beginning of maritime shipping, the thorny coral reefs of Bermuda have caused considerable havoc and mayhem. During the summer, when the sun warms the surround-

ing waters to 86°F, the sea is generally calm and peaceful.

But during the winter, violent storms come up suddenly and dissipate just as quickly. And, while the Bermuda islanders are snug in their stone and mortar homes, these tempestuous storms transform the reefs into a cauldron of heaving and frothing seas.

The result is 350 documented shipwrecks around this one little island paradise—making it one of the world's best wreck diving destinations.

Maritime historians suspect the first ship sank in Bermuda waters between 1500 and 1503. It was a Spanish explorer. As shipping commerce to the New World increased, ships continued to sink—building a massive inventory of wrecks. They came from all countries and represented all types, ranging from warships to luxury liners.

WRECKS OF GOLD

Among those lost ships are many with cargoes of gold and thus the name, Bermuda's Golden Circle. Teddy Tucker was the first to discover and recover a fortune in gold ingots. In 1955, he made Bermuda world famous when he discovered a fabulous gold cross

inset with six emeralds. He had hit upon a 1594 Spanish treasure galleon (identified as the *San Pedro*) that yielded gold bars, gold disks, pearl studded gold buttons, a gold ring and other jewelry.

Later, Teddy discovered the 1622 Spanish galleon wreck (the *San Antonio*) that yielded gold chain, gold rings, a gold religious medallion, gold and crystal earrings—a total of 57 gold objects.

In 1968, Bermuda diver Harry Cox discovered a 1580s Portuguese treasure wreck and recovered a 15 foot long solid gold double-link chain, hammered gold bars, gold rings, gold circlets and mint condition gold *cruzados* (coins).

No one is quite sure how many “golden wrecks” lie buried in the sand holes and crevices of Bermuda's coral reefs. Some sank with no survivors. Others were never documented.

BERMUDA'S UNDERSEA TREASURE

Today, Bermuda's best treasure remains underwater. It is the shipwrecks themselves—sort of an undersea museum of maritime antiquity, without fences or walls. More are being found every year.



BERMUDA WRECK DIVES

Most Popular Wreck Dives	Also Popular Wreck Dives	Dived Less Frequently
<i>Constellation</i>	<i>Airplane</i>	<i>Alert</i>
<i>Cristobal Colon</i>	<i>Beaumaris Castle</i>	<i>Avenger</i>
<i>Hermes</i>	<i>Blanch King</i>	<i>Collector</i>
<i>Iristo (Aristo)</i>	<i>Caesar</i>	<i>Curlew</i>
<i>Lartington</i>	<i>Caraquet</i>	<i>Drydock</i>
<i>L'Herminie</i>	<i>Col. William G. Ball</i>	<i>Eagle</i>
<i>Mary Celestia</i>	<i>Darlington</i>	<i>Frenchman</i>
<i>Minnie Breslau</i>	<i>Kate</i>	<i>King</i>
<i>Montana (Nola)</i>	<i>Madiana</i>	<i>Lord Amherst</i>
<i>North Carolina</i>	<i>Pollockshields</i>	<i>Ramona</i>
<i>Pelinaion</i>	<i>Rita Zovetto</i>	<i>Triton Ferry</i>
<i>Taunton</i>	<i>Virginia Merchant</i>	<i>Wychwood</i>



Veteran treasure hunter Teddy Tucker is believed to have located the remains of more than 165 wrecks, many of which remain secret.

Divers come from all points of the globe to explore these wrecks, often visiting two or three in one day. At last count, Bermuda offered 36 diveable wrecks that visitors find intriguing. Of this number, at least one-third are the most popular. Another one-third are dived less frequently and the last third are seldom visited.

WRECK DIVE CERTIFICATES

It's doubtful divers visiting Bermuda will actually find gold but they can bring home a souvenir of their wreck diving exploration. This year, Bermuda dive operators are awarding (at no extra charge) Shipwreck Certificates for diving any the island's 12 best shipwrecks:

BERMUDA DIVE OPERATORS

If you are interested in visiting Bermuda and diving its wrecks, contact any of the dive operators listed below:

Blue Water Divers Co., Ltd.

P.O. Box SN 165
Southampton SN BX, Bermuda
(441) 234-1034; (441) 234-3561 (fax)
E-mail: bwdivers@ibl.bm
www.divebermuda.com

Fantasea Diving

Darrell's Wharf, 1 Harbour Road
Paget PG 01, Bermuda
(888) DO A DIVE
(441) 236-6339; (441) 236-8926 (fax)
E-mail: fantasea@ibl.bm
www.Bermuda-Watersports.com/fantasea

Nautilus Diving, Ltd.

P.O. Box HM237
Hamilton HM AX, Bermuda
(441) 238-2332
(441) 295-9485; (441) 234-5180 (fax)

Scuba Look

Grotto Bay Beach Hotel
P.O. Box 658
Warwick WK BX, Bermuda
(441) 293-7319; (441) 295-2421 (fax)
E-mail: scubaluk@ibl.bm

South Side Scuba

Sonesta Beach Resort
Southampton, Bermuda
(441) 238-1833; (441) 236-0394 (fax)
E-mail: southsid@ibl.bm
www.Bermuda-Watersports.com

the *Constellation*, *Cristobal Colon*, *Hermes*, *Iristo*, *Lartington*, *L'Herminie*, *Mary Celestia*, *Minnie Breslauer*, *Montana*, *North Carolina*, *Pelinaion* and *Taunton*.

The Shipwreck Certificate program is open to any visiting diver or visitor enrolled in a scuba instruction class. Simply visit Bermuda during 1997; stay at any hotel, cottage or guesthouse; dive with any Bermuda dive operator; and receive a certificate for any one of the 12 designated wrecks. You can receive certificates for all 12 wrecks. 

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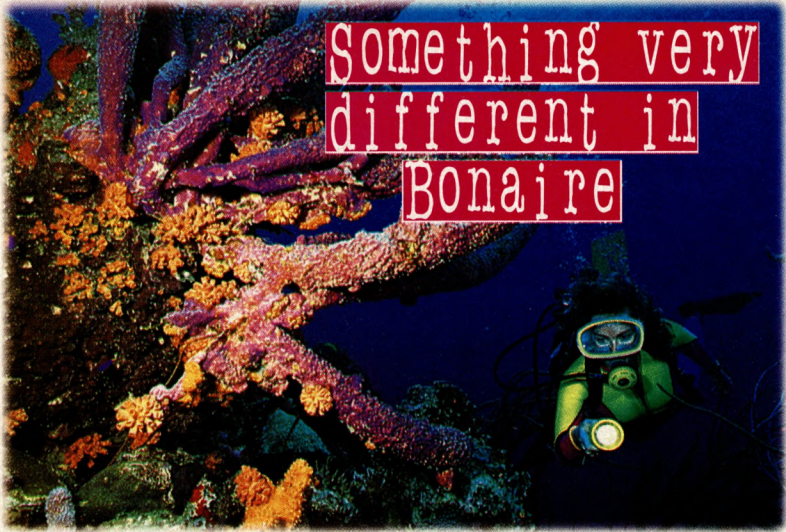
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RAMON'S VILLAGE

(Continued from Page 26)

to the outer reef wall. All of these dives were led by one or more of the experienced and professional divemasters from Ramon's friendly staff.

By midweek we were ready for a real adventure. Experienced divers in particular should not miss the optional all day excursion aboard *Miss Gina* to Lighthouse Reef and the Great Blue Hole. **Lighthouse Reef Atoll** features numerous spectacular drop-off sites around **Long Caye** and **Half Moon Caye** that are beautifully decorated with colorful sponges and corals. Visibility often exceeds 150 feet.

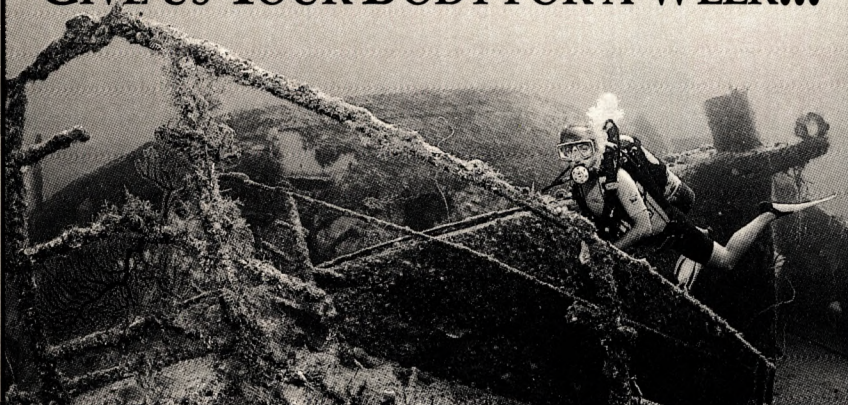


Valen and Joe Miller offer complete photo and video services, including rentals and slide processing, at the Joe Miller Photo Pro Center.

A dive in the **Great Blue Hole** is every bit as spectacular as colorful drop-offs or swimming with sharks and stingrays but for entirely different reasons. Here it is geology rather than biology that provides the thrill. The Great Blue Hole is a circular depression in the middle of Lighthouse Reef, nearly 1,000 feet in diameter and more than 400 feet deep. It was once a dry cavern formed during the last ice age, 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Ground water dripping from the cavern ceiling over many centuries formed huge stalactites that hang down like the teeth of a giant dragon. Today, at between 110 to 130 feet, divers can swim among this stony maze dwarfed by ancient dripstones, some as long as 30 feet. It's like swimming in another world, completely different from the coral reef. Bottom time is limited but those precious minutes will be remembered forever. Between dives, there is lunch and an island adventure on lovely Half Moon Caye, visiting the Booby and Frigate Bird Sanctuary.

The undersea adventures are complemented by the artistic mood and absolute tranquility of the resort. Lovely Ramon's Village is both an escapist's beach retreat and a dedicated dive resort. This handsome thatch roofed village is surrounded by greenery and framed by beach, sea and sky. Sixty bungalows are interspersed among sand and palms, some right on the beach, others grouped around attractive courtyards.

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About half of the bungalows are air-conditioned, those facing the sea are cooled by ceiling fans and slatted windows. Some are two bedroom suites that include a kitchen. The interiors are all tropically inspired, dressed in warm woods and appointed in wicker furnishings. Cathedral ceilings and peaked thatch roofs are a visual signature of the entire village.

The social and geographic center of the resort is a handsome freshwater pool and an indoor and outdoor restaurant. There is a bar, a boutique and gift shop adjacent to the pool area. The restaurant serves three meals a day, including a complete breakfast menu and lunch and dinners featuring seafood, island and continental cuisine, all excellently prepared. On the beach is a wooden dock that leads to the dive shop and boat fleet.

Shop manager Rick Sutherland, a 10 year veteran, oversees a complete staff of captains, instructors and divemasters. Ramon's offers resort courses, open water referrals and a wide range of advanced courses, including a certification in underwater photography. Rental gear is available and gear rinse, wet storage and freshwater showers are all dockside.

Also right on the dock is the Joe Miller Photo Pro Center, offering slide film processing, video and still camera rental, instruction, emergency camera repair and custom photo and video shoots. A video pro accompanies the Shark-Ray Alley and Lighthouse Reef dives, offering a professionally produced video souvenir at the end of the day.



TACA's modern 767 and 737 jets fly nonstop to Belize daily from Miami, Houston and New Orleans, with immediate connections from Los Angeles and San Francisco.

San Pedro Town, where shops, bars and restaurants abound, is only a few minutes' walk from the resort. Or, bicycles and golf carts can be rented for an island sojourn. Glassbottom outrigger canoes and other watertoys are available at the dock. A special outing via boat and then van to the Maya ruins of Altun-ha is one of the mainland excursions offered from the resort. Flights from Belize City, your international arrival point, are available from several local carriers every one-half hour during the day.

For more information, contact Ramon's Village at (800) 624-4215, (601) 649-1900 or fax (601) 649-1996. 🐟

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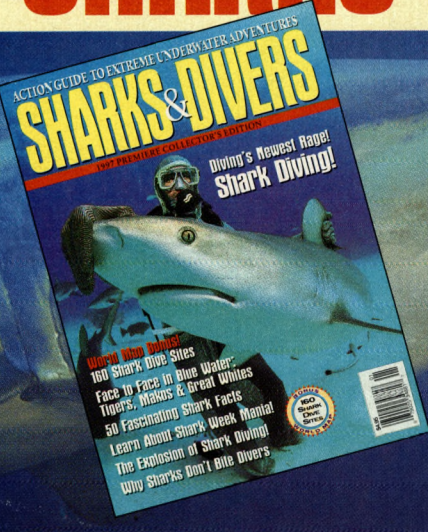
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photo/Stephen Frink

REEF Headquarters, Key Largo, Florida. From left: Laddie Akins, Executive Director; Deena Wells, Director of Operations; and John Pitcairn, Director of Administration and Development.



A REEF Field I.D. group after a week of fishwatching in Belize. Below: Divers and snorkelers can use their U/W skills to help the environment.



photo/Bill Gleason

What's REEF?

An Opportunity to Use Your Diving/Snorkeling Skills to Help the U/W World!

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL GLEASON

Want to have more fun on every dive, even the boring ones? Want to make a positive contribution to the marine environment, without becoming an eco-zealot? You can. All you have to do is join one of the most exciting, grass roots organizations in the diving world: REEF.

Thousands of divers already have—about 90 percent renew their membership every year—which means they're on to something. That "something" is fishwatching and identification. Fishwatchers, much like birdwatchers, are intrigued with the natural world and want to learn all they can about marine life on every dive.

In 1991, a group of people in Florida created the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF). Probably best known among its founders are Paul Humann and Ned DeLoach, who write, photograph and publish the *Reef Fish Identification* books, the "Bibles" of fishwatchers worldwide. Paul and Ned have spent most of their adult lives studying and identifying fish, and educating divers.

The organization they helped found is very different from many environmental organizations in several ways: It is purely volunteer and grass roots in nature. Informal is the style; results count, not rhetoric. And, all activities for REEF projects are done by divers and snorkelers, who have fun while they are making positive contributions to Citizen Science.

Here's how it works. Whenever you make a dive, take along a

REEF U/W Survey Slate and record the number of different species you see and estimate their abundance (common, rare, etc). After the dive, or vacation, you complete the REEF forms and send them back. Working with the Marine Conservation Science Center at the University of Miami, they compile a database that tracks species distribution and population trends. Working hand in hand with other large organizations, such as the The Nature Conservancy, they use the data to identify problem areas and practical solutions.

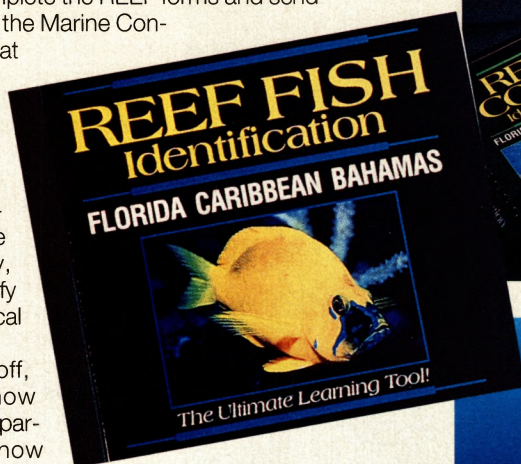
Now, before you beg off, explaining you don't know many fish so you couldn't participate, let me tell you how easy it is to get started. REEF has fishwatching programs at many popular dive resorts around the world. Just get the field guides and get down to it! Once you start identifying the fish, you'll find it's easy and fascinating. REEF sponsors group trips but individuals can participate on any dive. REEF also provides its members with field lists, slates and guides to make it easier to participate.

There are two membership options: one is free, the other costs less than a good dinner.

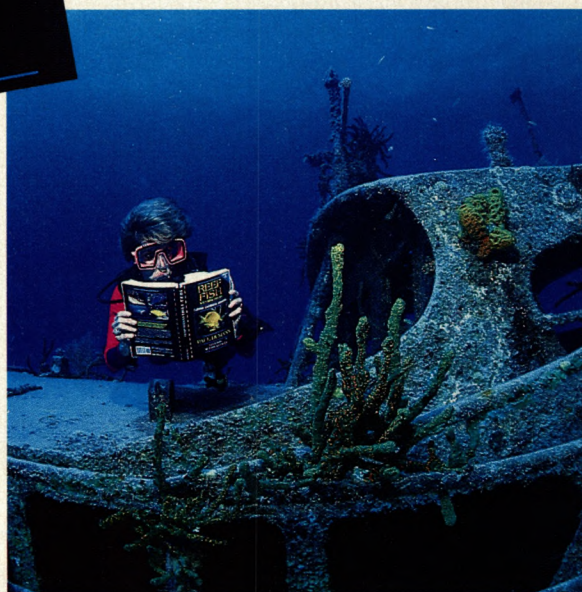
SURVEY MEMBERSHIP: This is free to all members who write in. You receive a field survey packet to help you get started, a membership card and will be sent copies of the newsletter, *Reef Notes*. You also get an access code to the Web site, so you can contribute field notes via your computer.

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP: Keeping in contact with members, collecting data and running programs does cost real money. I can verify that REEF is one of the most cost efficient organizations there is but still needs a constant supply of donations. Even if you don't want to do survey dives or snorkel trips, you can still help protect our marine resources by becoming a Contributing Member. In addition to receiving the information mentioned previously, you get a rugged U/W Survey Slate, Fish I.D. Card, a REEF tag for your BC and a decal.

REEF is a concerned group of divers, snorkelers and ocean enthusiasts who are using their skills and resources to fight problems facing the marine environment in a down to earth, results oriented way. And, they are not opposed to having a little fun along the way! Regardless of what level of participation you'd like to try, please support this organization if you can. The government and traditional sources of foundation funding for ocean projects is at a critically low level and not expected to change in the future. Citizen Science is the way to go and REEF is the best example of concerned citizens doing something about the health of the oceans. You can use the card attached to this story or contact REEF at its Key Largo, Florida Headquarters; (305) 451-0312, fax (305) 451-0028 or find it on the Web at <http://www.reef.org>.



The basic references for a fishwatcher are Paul Humann's Reef ID books and/or CD-ROM. Don't take either underwater!



Yes, I want to join REEF!

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Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center

NEW DIRECTIONS
FOR A KEY LARGO FAVORITE

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEPHEN FRINK

One of Key Largo's most revered dive operations is taking off in some interesting new directions—travel, dive equipment repair, nitrox and other water-sports. This is in addition to offering daily dive trips to the reefs and wrecks of the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary and a heavy emphasis on scuba instruction. Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center is prepared to offer its guests the convenience of "one call does it all" booking.

Atlantis Travel: Let's say you have done your homework and decided on a dive vacation in Key Largo. You know you'll find great shallow reefs rich with marine life, warm tropical waters and enthralling shipwrecks. But you have a bit of a budget, in terms of both time and money. One call to (800) 331-DIVE can answer all your questions. You will learn about air connections from your home city, the cost of airfare, the price of various rental car options and the cost of the dive lodging package. Atlantis Travel will book it for you, give confirmation numbers and send your tickets to your home or office. Travel planning for a Key Largo dive holiday has never been easier.



Above: Captain Slate personally conducts fish feeding sessions during his famous Creature Feature dive, conducted near the City of Washington wreck. **Right:** Sea kayaking is one of Captain Slate's new offerings.



DIVE EQUIPMENT REPAIR CENTER:

Captain Slate's has just tripled the size of its dive equipment repair facility and now services all brands of regulators and BCs, in fact, all dive gear except computers. The technicians even do tank VIPs and offer two day turnarounds on hydrostatic testing.

NITROX FACILITY:

Captain Slate's offers the largest DNAx nitrox fill station in Florida. Utilizing the new membrane technology that extracts nitrogen from the mix rather than adding oxygen, its fill station can blend various percentages without the need to keep highly flammable pure oxygen on the premises. This also allows consumers to use their own tanks and regulators instead of special oxygen-safe rigs. The compressor system contains 30,000 cubic feet of cascade storage and can pump nitrox at 30 cubic feet per minute.

While most dives off Key Largo are on reefs 25 to 40 feet deep, shipwrecks such as the U.S. Coast Guard cutters **Bibb** and **Duane** (maximum depth 130 and 120 feet respectively) make the enhanced safe bottom time of nitrox I or II quite an advantage. Or, you can use nitrox like I do, by diving air tables and thereby enhancing the safety margin. Key Largo is actually a perfect environment

for nitrox because there are no deep vertical walls where it might be possible to exceed the depth limit for the specific mix being used. Atlantis Dive Center has enthusiastically embraced this very viable diving science.

ATLANTIS WATERSPORTS: Captain Slate's has long worked in collaboration with the Key Largo Howard Johnson. This lovely 100 room resort complex is in the center of Key Largo (Mile Marker 101.5) overlooking scenic Florida Bay on the sunset side of the island. Offering a small sand beach on the water; freshwater swimming pool; restaurant and lounge; and in-room amenities, such as cable color television, direct dial telephones, refrigerator, coffee maker and even a microwave, the Howard Johnson has long been popular with traveling divers. Now, with the addition of Atlantis Watersports on the beach, there are more things to do during the nondiving hours of the day. Atlantis Watersports offers kayaking, parasailing, sunset cruises and complimentary scuba demonstrations several times each day in the hotel swimming pool.



Captain Slate often has cozy encounters with opportunistic moray eels during his popular fish feeding sessions.

I recently tried kayaking while researching this article. There is a wonderful world in the backcountry of the Florida Bay. The vast mangrove forests represent their own unique ecosystem, one that is most perfectly experienced from an ocean kayak.

I found kayaking was much more effortless than the canoes. The paddle is more efficient for a single operator and the water resistance is minimal. It also helps that the bay is almost always in the lee of the prevailing winds. It is very quiet out on the ocean without the noise of a diesel or outboard engine. I was able to approach brown pelicans and herons resting in the mangroves and, incredibly, I even got close to a Manatee mother and calf. I will definitely go kayaking again soon and next time I'll bring my snorkeling gear.

SCUBA INSTRUCTION: Captain Slate's is very eclectic in its scuba certification credentials. Its instructors offer courses sanctioned by YMCA, NAUI, PADI, SSI, NASDS, CMAS, ACUC, IANTD and

NASE, specialize in resort courses, open water referrals, specialty instruction, technical diving and can teach in several languages. Atlantis is the only year-round YMCA Instructor Training Career Institute in the nation and features placement opportunities within a network of more than 1,700 YMCAs across the country. It certainly helps in terms of credibility and placement that Slate is the National Chairman of the YMCA Scuba Program.

DAILY DIVE TRIPS: The reason Spencer Slate originally got into the dive business in Key Largo in 1978 was that he loves scuba diving. He has never forgotten

this is the motivation that drives his clientele, keeping them returning year after year. Everything else is complementary to this dive imperative shared by the guests and staff at Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center.

Three custom 42 foot diesel V-hull vessels are used for the daily reef trips. Although the boats are U.S. Coast Guard certified for 40 divers, only a maximum of 25 are ever booked. The range of available dive options covers sites from the far northern end of the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, such as **Carysfort Reef**, all the way to **Molasses Reef** and

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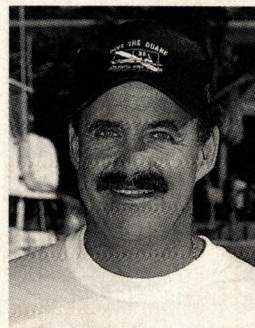
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CAPTAIN SLATE'S

the *Bibb* and *Duane* to the south. Because Atlantis Dive Center is nearer the north end of the island, the boats visit **The Elbow** quite frequently.

The Elbow is so named because it juts farther seaward than most reefs. This has made it a magnet for shipwrecks. Two of the wrecks provide a scenic background for Captain Slate's world famous **Creature Feature**. As seen on two separate Discovery television specials, *48 Hours*, Fox television and *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, Slate personally conducts exciting fish feeding sessions on the **City of Washington** and **Mike's Wreck**. Both were steel hulled vessels, now mostly scattered remains of deck plating and exposed ribs. But they provide wondrous refuge for tropical marine life.

Slate has been handfeeding his "pet" Barracuda and Green Moray Eels for years, especially at the *City of Washington*. Large Barracuda show up as soon as the boat is tied to its mooring.



Captain Spencer Slate

Once the divers settle onto the sand bottom and Slate pulls the first Ballyhoo from the bag, a high voltage fish feed is inevitable. Barracuda flash by with mouths agape to snag the

baitfish Slate holds between clenched teeth. Six foot moray eels wrap themselves between Slate's legs and around his neck, looking for their fair share of the handout. Swarms of Yellowtail Snappers dart about, looking for any spare scraps, and occasional interlopers such as Nurse Sharks are likely to drop in for an opportunistic feed.

While Slate is an excellent ringmaster for this underwater circus, an interactive aspect to the show has evolved over the years. Slate will actually bring the morays to his divers and let them hold them in their arms. Staff videographers document the whole Creature Feature, producing the ultimate souvenir of Key Largo's most exciting dive.

For further information on any of Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center programs, call (800) 331-3483 or (305) 451-3020. E-mail may be addressed to capt_slate@reefnet.com or visit the Web site at <http://www.pennekamp.com/atlantis>.

SIGNALING TECHNIQUES

BY DENNIS K. GRAVER

1. List 12 signaling devices divers can carry.
2. What is the least desirable signaling device for divers and why?
3. What is the audible (non-verbal) emergency signal for divers?
4. What hand signal should divers use for surface emergencies?
5. What is the short range emergency light signal for divers?
6. What is the long range emergency light signal?
7. Describe two ways to use sunlight for emergency signaling.
8. What is the emergency line pull signal?
9. List five methods to make yourself more visible for a daylight air search.
10. List nine methods to make yourself more visible at water level when adrift.
11. **True or False:** There are hand-launchable marine flares divers may use for emergency signaling.
12. List four methods to signal divers from the surface.
13. Describe a technique a trapped diver could use to signal people at the surface.
14. If you are adrift after a night dive, what are five methods you could use to signal for help?
15. When sending signals what is the primary rule to keep in mind?
16. When receiving signals what is the primary rule to remember?
17. List five ways to gain the attention of another diver who is out of reach U/W.
18. What is the message sent by a vessel displaying three vertical lights—red over white over red—at night?
19. What is the message sent by a vessel displaying the blue and white international Alpha flag?
20. Everyone who might need to use them should _____ the signals in advance.

- Answers:**
1. Whistle, low pressure air horn, signal tube, mirror (stainless steel), buoy and line, strobe, dive light, marine flares, marker dye, clicker, tank banger, buddy line.
 2. Smoke bomb, because corrosion can cause spontaneous detonation and because the activated device can burn the diver.
 3. Four short whistle blasts, pause, repeat, pause, repeat.
 4. Extended arm repeatedly waved from over head to surface of the water (thrashing).
 5. Exaggerated, repeated up and down motion.
 6. Repeated SOS—three short bursts, pause, three longer bursts, pause, three short bursts.
 7. Send SOS using reflected sunlight from a mirror or mask lens.
 8. Four pulls, pause, four pulls, pause, four pulls.
 9. Brightly colored equipment, marine flares, bright surface float, splashing water, marker dye.
 10. Brightly colored equipment, bright surface float, signal tube, mirror, throwing water into the air, dive light (night), strobe (night), reflective tape on equipment (night).
 11. True.
 12. Electronic: underwater speaker or siren. Rapping: rap four times on a steel hull, metal plate or steel scuba tank. Flashing: flash strobe four times, pause, repeat. Engine revving: start boat engine, rev four times, pause, repeat, pause, repeat, stop engine. Deploy a float, lift bag or buoy with a line attached. The line will slacken when the float reaches the surface. Pull the float beneath the surface and allow it to resurface (bob) four times, pause, repeat, pause, repeat.
 14. Strobe light, dive light, whistle, air horn, splashing water (white foam and perhaps bioluminescence).
 15. Signals should be deliberate and exaggerated.
 16. Acknowledge receipt of signal.
 17. Tank taps, tank banger, clicker, underwater whistle, drop small objects in front of the diver below.
 18. This vessel is engaged in underwater operations and unable to get out of the way of approaching vessels.
 19. My maneuverability is restricted because I have a diver down; keep well clear at slow speed.
 20. Review.

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EXPLORING THE BISMARCK SEA

(Continued from Page 108)

are endless and exciting. Besides just the traditional land based week stay, or a normal or extended range cruise on one of the live-aboards, there are many Bismarck Sea options. Combine a cou-

PETER HUGHES TRIPS

Divers frequently ask if Peter Hughes will actually be on any of his vessels when they book trips. While Peter is a frequent passenger on all of his live-aboards, there's still only a small chance that he'll be on your trip. If you'd like to dive with him in Papua New Guinea's Bismarck Sea, he is scheduled to be on:

FeBrina: August 26 to September 2

Walindi Plantation: September 2 to 6

Star Dancer: September 6 to 13

ple of days (or a week) at Walindi with a week on one of the live-aboards. You will be tired when you get to the island and having a couple of days of land based

PORT MORESBY TIP

If you have to overnight at either end of the trip, there's a great place just 20 minutes from the airport that's safe and comfortable—Loloata Island Resort. It's completely self-contained and on its own one mile long island in Bootless Bay. There are 16 very comfortable units and a full service dive operation. The diving here has only average visibility but Bootless Bay is home to all the rare fish folks come from all over the world to see. And the guides can find 'em for you!

diving and relaxation before the live-aboard can be perfect. You can also choose to take back to back live-aboard vacations, taking in the entire Bismarck Sea, east and west!

PAPUA NEW GUINEA TRAVEL NOTES

- Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, is the city of entry
- Air Niugini handles all internal connections
- It is a one hour flight to New Britain Island
- A visa is required (it can be obtained upon arrival in PNG at Immigration)
- Malaria medication is recommended.

After transferring through Moresby, you catch a small Air Niugini jet to Hoskins airstrip (not airport), on New Britain Island. After a 45 minute car transfer to Walindi, your travels are over and exploration begins.

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live-aboards and day tours of the spectacular topside scenery on New Britain can be arranged at Walindi. The Sepik River (on the mainland portion of New Guinea) is one of the strongest cultural attractions.

Given the wide range of opportunities, there's also some good news on the information/booking side. *Star Dancer*, *Febrina* and *Walindi* can all be booked through Peter Hughes Diving in Miami, Florida. The staff is well trained on the different itineraries and options, and can alert you to special cruising and land based opportunities that come up from time to time.

For more information on any of the options for exploring the Bismarck Sea, write to Peter Hughes Diving, 1390 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 1109, Coral Gables, FL 33146. You can call (800) 9DANCER (800-932-6237), (305) 669-9391, fax (305) 669-9475 or e-mail dancer@peter-hughes.com. You can also find information on the Internet at <http://www.peter-hughes.com>.

SAND DOLLAR CONDOMINIUM RESORT

(Continued from Page 18)

easily accessible by beach and boat. Beneath the calm, turquoise sea, these sites have been protected by law since the early 1970s. No spearfishing, anchoring or collecting are the basic tenets of the Bonaire Marine Park. Park users must pay an annual \$10 (U.S.) fee, which funds the boat mooring system, education and research. The lush reefs that surround Bonaire and Klein Bonaire, a nearby uninhabited island, are teeming with colorful tropical fish and healthy corals.

The diving, water conditions and weather are truly great. Bonaire is an ideal destination for divers of all skill levels. Famous for its lack of high rise resorts and traffic lights, its diver-friendly inhabitants have assured a plethora of professional dive shops. Diving tourism is the primary business and, consequently, Bonaire also offers great accommodations and food.

Sand Dollar Condominium Resort has a well-earned reputation for its unique "home away from home" atmosphere. Stretching along Bonaire's central coast, it offers 73 studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments overlooking the Caribbean. Each condo, designed as a vacation home, sports luxurious details, including private balconies, air-conditioned bedrooms, tropical furnishings, cable TV and fully equipped kitchens right down to dishwashers and microwave ovens. Perfect for couples, families and groups, Sand Dollar offers a variety of ac-

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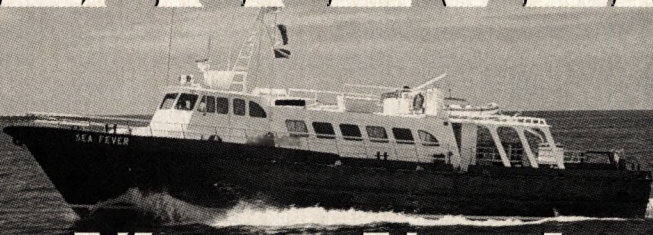
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tivities or just plain peace and quiet. Easy and convenient, a small shopping arcade on the property has a bank, grocery store, car rental agency, ice cream shop and an island tour operator.

Nestled along the sea with the resort are the Sand Dollar Dive and Photo Shop and the Green Parrot Restaurant. The Green Parrot is one of the most popular eateries on Bonaire, well known for its sunset happy hour and specialty frozen

SDM TRAVEL AT A GLANCE

Sand Dollar Resort is best known for:

- Outstanding macro diving
- Water's edge location
- On-site dive and photo shop
- Small shopping arcade and restaurant on-site

concoctions, as well as its easy, American-style dining and fine service.

Andre Nahr, director of Sand Dollar Dive and Photo, has spent more than ten years developing a re-

liable and reputable program to satisfy an amazing variety of diver demands. Any visitor can choose a dive package ranging from basic to adventure filled.

Unlimited shore diving and staggered boat departures—8:45 and 10:30 am and 1:30 and 3:30 pm—allow divers to customize their vacations. Start the day early or sleep in, just sign up for the boat dive of your choice! Knowledgeable instructors oversee one of the largest teaching operations in the Caribbean—more than 20 classes are available. Diving development instruction ranges from one day learn to dive lessons, week-long certification classes, advanced and divemaster courses to medic first aid and rescue specialties.

It is also possible to sign up for introductory and advanced photography and videography classes taught by two of the best photo pros in the Caribbean, Jim Brandon and Julie Morgan. Jerry Ligon heads up a special department for nature lovers and naturalist classes are offered both underwater and topside. Introduction to Fish Watching: Identification and Behavior, is taught to both snorkelers and divers. There are wonderful excursions around the island to experience Bonaire's unique flora and fauna, including iguanas, parrots and myriad species of cacti.

Sand Dollar Dive and Photo even has a unique adventure package that appeals to all ages and interests. A week-long program or just a daily taste can be arranged, featuring diving, ocean kayaking, nature excursions, guided snorkeling and mountain biking.

There's a special Sand Penny Club that schedules daily activities for children throughout the year. August is Family Month on Bonaire and, during this special month, all children under the age of 15 stay free at Sand Dollar.

Visit Sand Dollar for the June 21 to 28,

1997 annual Nikonos Shootout or try your photo and video skills during November, when the entire month is devoted to Sand Dollar's own photo contest.

Whatever your interests, you are going to have a great time at Sand Dollar Condominium Resort on Bonaire. For brochures, further information and/or reservations, call Sand Dollar Reservations at (800) 288-4773 or (407) 774-9292, fax (407) 774-9322 or write to P.O. Box 3253, Longwood, Florida 32779. The direct phone number is (011) 599-7-8738; fax (011) 599-7-8760. 🐢

Dive Notes

DIVE BOAT SAFARI: Dive Boat Safari and the Barbados Hilton now offer the convenience of a single beachfront location for Barbados divers. On the south side of Carlisle Bay, the luxurious Hilton is only minutes from many of the best wrecks and reefs in Barbados. Many dives sites are so close to the Hilton that Dive Boat



Safari returns to the beach so you can relax ashore for the surface interval between dives. The *Berwyn*, one of the finest shallow wrecks in the world, is only five minutes from Dive Boat Safari's shop. A French tugboat sunk in 1919, the *Berwyn* rests on the sand in only 25 feet of water in the calm, protected lee of Carlisle Bay. The intact hull is packed with an incredible diversity of sea life, including exotic species such as frogfish, seahorses and Shortnosed Batfish. Other great wreck dives are available, including the 365 foot *Stavronikita*, which extends from 20 feet deep at the top of the mast to 130 feet deep at the propeller. Dive Boat Safari also visits all of the reefs along the south and west coasts of Barbados. These reefs feature a profusion of healthy corals and colorful sponges. Big schools of tropical fish, morays, lobster and sea turtles are seen on nearly every dive.

George Hurley, the manager of Dive Boat Safari, was the first PADI instructor on Barbados and has maintained a strong emphasis on instruction at the shop. All dive courses from resort to assistant instructor are taught here, as well as a wide variety of specialty courses.

For more information, call Dive Boat Safari at (800) 513-5824, (246) 427-4350 or fax (246) 436-8946. 🐢

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BLUE WATER DIVERS

(Continued from Page 14)

you board the boat and when you come out of the water. Same Mitch, new hat. He and divemaster Carl Bean are the only fulltime staff members of Blue Water Divers. Although he has been in business for 14 years, Mitch has resisted expanding because he prefers a personal, friendly operation. His infectious humor and easy-going manner makes everyone feel as if they are diving with a longtime friend.

Blue Water Divers isn't large but it is a full service operation with a complete line of rental equipment and a small retail store and boutique. Instruction is available from resort course through divemaster.

The other two Blue Water Divers boats include *Calypso Cruiser* and *Reggae Express*, both easily boarded from the beach and limited to a small number of divers.

SALT RAKER INN: Jenny Smith's Salt Raker Inn is the perfect match for Mitch's Blue Water Divers. Originally constructed more than 150 years ago by a Bermuda shipwright, Salt Raker Inn is comfortable, charming and informal. Staying at the Salt Raker is almost like being at home.

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Grand Turk is best known for:

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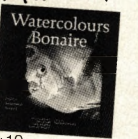
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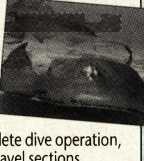
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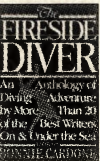
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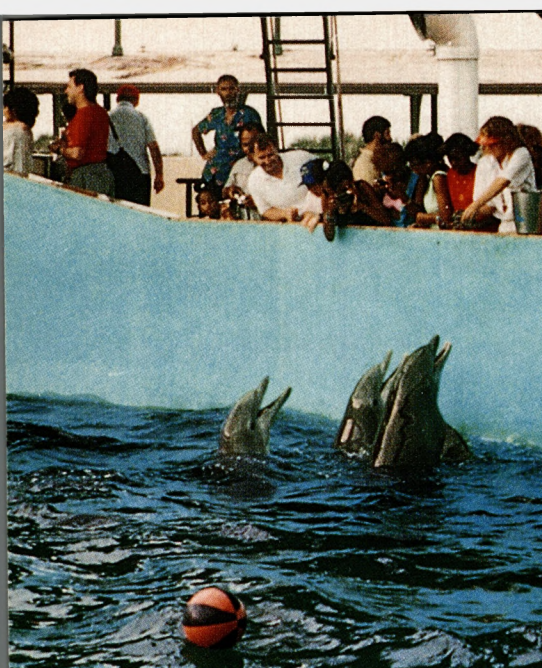
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Dixie Divers Guides Snorkelers and Divers Through the Tanks of Marineland

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHIRLEY VANDERBILT

The Vanderbilt family (unfortunately, no relation to the writer!) built Florida's first marine life attraction along the northeast coast in the early 1900s. For decades, Marineland has been re-configured and expanded, entertaining and educating generations of visitors about exotic life. Anyone remember the '50s horror flick, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*? It was filmed in Marineland's main tank. Thankfully, the only creatures in the tanks these days are compliments of nature, not Hollywood. With the park's most recent renovation comes a revolutionary new program open to divers and nondivers alike, under the professional direction of one of Florida's foremost authorities on diving. Dixie Divers has been selected to work exclusively with Marineland, providing several innovative experiences within the marine park. A two hour program allows guests to snorkel or dive with the marine life in the tank. A four hour program for nondivers includes an introduction to diving and an escorted tour with an instructor in the tank. In fact, several levels of scuba instruction will be offered at Marineland, from Discover Diving to full certification courses.

Water pumped straight from the Atlantic Ocean keeps the marine tank's environment stable and provides a unique simulated ocean experience for program participants. You may choose fishwatching, video, still photography or treasure hunting as the focus of your dive. To further enhance educational opportunities, a Marine Mammal Assistant Trainer program

has also been opened to participants with divemaster level certification. A full

week of living on site and working intensively with actual dolphin trainers adds a unique element to any dive professional's resume, enhancing the chances for job placement in this career area. Abbreviated forms of the marine mammal training are also offered: a three day introductory course for certified divers and a one day program for the general public. Whatever level of participation, this program promises to be an exciting adventure for all involved.

It's not surprising to find Dixie Divers in a starring role at Marineland. This multifaceted company has a history of continually pushing past tradition to blaze new trails in the dive industry. Much of this thrust originates from the indomitable energy and creativity of co-founder and owner, Nestor Palmero. A leading dive professional, he has skillfully guided his enterprise from its humble beginnings as a small retail store in 1979 to the establishment of two career training sites and a statewide franchising of Dixie Divers' PADI Five Star facilities.

With seven franchise and five company owned and operated stores throughout Florida, Palmero's vision is now expanding to the national scene. His current focus on providing divers with a nationwide network of professional dive stores will encompass more than just moving franchising beyond Florida. Also included in the design is a network of Dixie Divers charter bookings on privately operated, custom dive boats meeting specific safety guidelines and service requirements established under contract with Dixie Divers. Amenities such as fresh fruit, camera tables, rinse buckets and courteous assistance by a professionally attired crew are all a part of the company's commitment to provide a consistently high quality dive experience to the Dixie Divers' customer.

Another facet of Dixie Divers' expansion is the international travel program, which brings us back to Marineland. Many who have received their certification through Dixie Divers have remained a part of the "family," preferring to join store



Marineland Florida and Dixie Divers have embarked on a relationship that will include scuba instruction at Marineland. A two or four hour program will also allow guests to snorkel or scuba with marine life in Marineland's main tank. Above and right: Pool and nitrox training.



sponsored trips accompanied by a Dixie Divers pro or booking with groups through Dixie's wholesale travel division. Both of these options are accessed through toll free numbers, either connecting directly to a Dixie Divers' retail operation or to a travel desk of professional agents. This same travel service is available to secure your reservations for any of the Marineland adventures. Marineland is centrally located to many Florida attractions, such as historic St. Augustine, lively Daytona Beach and Orlando's Disney World, making it a great stopover on a Florida tour or a complete vacation in itself. Dixie Divers' marine life programs all include a full day pass for the park; and hotel packages are available as well as campground and marina facilities for the more rustic adventures.

At the present time, a minimum group of four is required for scheduling the marine tank dive or snorkel experience but the eventual establishment of a Dixie Divers franchise at Marineland will open the opportunity for individual bookings. Future plans at the park also include the use of the marine tanks' controlled environment for testing new dive products.

Education has been a major focus for Palmero and Dixie Divers from the beginning of the Dixie Divers concept. The marine mammal training program is just one of a variety of educational opportunities developed through Dixie Divers' main training component, the South East Diving Institute (SEDI). With a rural, administrative campus in Ft. Pierce and a second training site in the tropical Keys, SEDI is the only career training program offering two state licensed PADI Career Development Centers. The benefit for students is increased flexibility in choice of training environment and an opportunity to experience not only the exciting drift dives of Florida's southeast coast but also the beauty of the living coral reefs bordering Key Largo.

SEDI has, in essence, become a training center for the entire Dixie Divers' network, including the franchise operations. Many graduates enter the "family" as career professionals, enhancing quality control of Dixie Divers' service and products as well as instruction. As a course director himself, Nestor Palmero actively promotes this striving toward quality with his involvement at the local and national level of the industry. Currently in his second term with the DEMA board of directors, Palmero was honored with the PADI Outstanding Achievement Award in 1995—recognition of his contribution to the growth of recreational diving.

Dixie Divers' retail facilities offer a complete line of services, including full PADI instruction, retail sales, equipment repair and service, travel opportunities, local dive charter bookings and a host

of special events such as the yearly Lobstermania contest and reef clean-up. At the SEDI Career Development Centers, the choice of career courses includes basic to instructor training, resort management and a variety of adjunct certifications to enhance the marketability and performance of a dive professional.

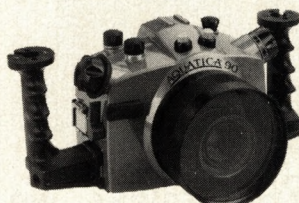
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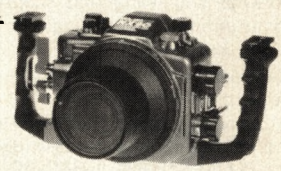
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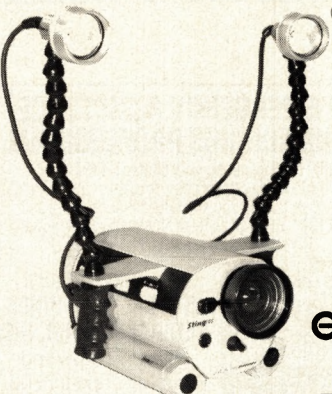
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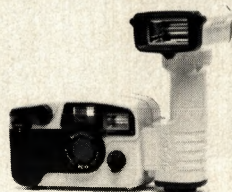
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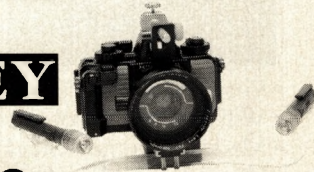
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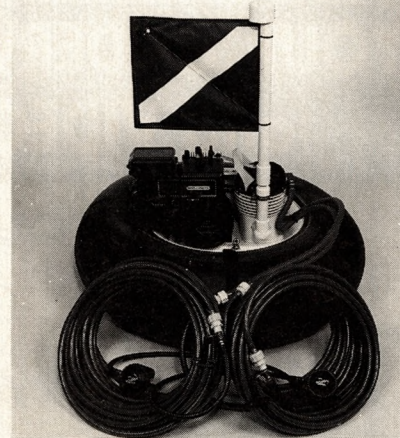


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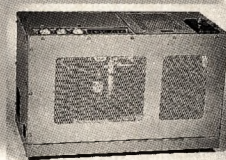
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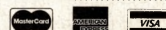


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U.S. TECH'S EX

(Continued from Page 56)

might turn the knob all the way out for maximum airflow.

The hose and adjustment knob ports are exactly the same, so the EX second stage can be set up with either right or left side hose connection. This could be ben-

U.S. TECH EX REGULATOR KEY FEATURES

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- Air-balanced flow-through piston for consistent high performance regardless of scuba tank pressure.
- Two high pressure ports, plus four low pressure ports on a swivel.

Second Stage

- Downstream demand valve further enhances performance.
- Sensitivity control knob adjusts cracking pressure.
- Can be set up for right or left side hose attachment.

eficial if it is used as an octopus. For sensitivity and longevity, both the exhaust valve and diaphragm are made of silicone rubber (clear and blue, respectively).

CONCLUSION

Whether you best appreciate the EX regulator's proven, high performance design or that it can be diver adjusted to suit changing conditions, it might offer just the combination of features you've been looking for. With a five year warranty, including parts and service, and a suggested retail price of \$350,

USER COMMENTS

Good looks don't lie: "With the sleek, satin chrome first stage and racy second stage, the EX brags about the performance it does, indeed, provide."

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it's hard to beat. As mentioned, it is available with a yoke or DIN connection and there is a nitrox compatible version. For more information, contact Berry Scuba, 6674 North Northwest Highway, Chicago, Illinois 60631; (800) 621-6019 or (773) 775-1815 (fax). The e-mail address is berryscuba@juno.com. ➤

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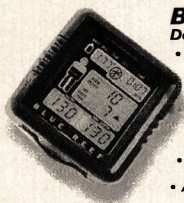
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CLOSE-UP SPECIALS

Preparing for the Big One

BY ERICH SCHULTZ

Depending on where you live or what your hobbies are, the big one can have several meanings. To residents of San Francisco or Los Angeles, the big one could be another earthquake. To residents of Florida or the Caribbean, the big one typically refers to the next devastating hurricane. To divers, the big one means the trip of the year or even a lifetime. As a PADI master scuba diver trainer who has worked and lived in some of the world's most beautiful diving environments, I have been fortunate to witness many big ones. The majority of these trips were wonderful experiences. Unfortunately, a few are remembered with frustration and resentment. The good news is the vast majority of these disasters can be avoided through simple pre-trip planning. By following the next few steps, you can enjoy the underwater world instead of just trying to get into it.

BRING YOUR C-CARD: While this may seem rudimentary, a surprising number of people leave home without it. Twenty

minutes prior to the dive boat's departure is not the time to inform the divemaster or boat captain your C-card is in your desk at home. While many dive agencies have telephone verification available, many are not available on weekends or there may be no phone available at all. With most reputable dive operations, no card means no dive.

BRING YOUR LOGBOOK: Who keeps logbooks anyway? Smart divers do, that's who! Dive logs are valuable tools dive operators use to determine who will dive when and where. As with the majority of safety minded dive professionals, I would much rather dive with an experienced open water level diver than an inexperienced advanced level diver. Experienced divers with an up to date logbook are welcome on the more challenging and many times more beautiful dive sites while those with an unknown dive history will "dive with the small fish."

BE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY PREPARED: Nothing ruins a dive vacation

quicker than being too exhausted to enjoy it. People work very hard to earn a living but, unfortunately, many do it from behind a desk. Being fit does not mean competing in triathlons but being fit enough to pull yourself up the dive ladder. Fit divers use less air so they get more bang for their buck. Fit divers can swim against mild currents and are able to make a surface swim to the boat without the humiliating experience of having to be towed. If you can't dive frequently prior to your trip, try to condition your muscles by walking each night for a month or two before you leave.

CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME: Do you dive with a computer? Trust me, finding lithium batteries in the middle of nowhere is an experience to avoid. Is your mask strap OK? How about your fins? Even if you recently had your equipment serviced at your local shop, check it yourself. There have been many times where "serviced" equipment is missing O-rings, mouthpiece retaining

(Continued on Page 160)

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The 1997 World Underwater Cleanup

LAST CALL FOR TRASH CAPTAINS

BY BILL GLEASON

In September, 1996, volunteer divers in all 50 states and many countries around the world staged the largest event in the history of diving—the 1996 Underwater Cleanup. Sponsored by the Center for Marine Conservation (in tandem with its International Beach Cleanups), PADI, DEMA and SKIN DIVER Magazine, this effort culminated in tens of thousands of divers lugging trash out of the oceans and waterways of the world.

Unfortunately, there's still some trash down there and we're declaring war on it again this year! The target date is September 20, 1997 and we are urging dive stores, instructors and concerned divers and snorkelers to stage an event right in their diving backyards! It can be as informal as a couple of buddies getting together or as elaborate as the Laguna Beach, California cleanup, where hundreds of divers scoured this popular Southern California diving area for trash!

Trash Captains, those volunteers who will choose the site, recruit their friends and families and hit (or supervise hitting) the water on September 20 are urgently needed at this time.

Here's how it works. Folks wishing to become Trash Captains should contact either the CMC or PADI and let them know where the event will be held. Those organizations will send you a complete package of information, including trash reporting forms and tips on how to conduct a cleanup. They will also register you as an official Trash Captain and contact you through their state and international coordinators to see if you need any help. All Trash Captains will receive free publicity for their events from PADI and will be mentioned in SKIN DIVER's September 1997 issue. This will help you recruit even more divers and snorkelers for your event. Our goal is to smash the record we set last year but we can't do it without the help of last year's volunteers (and a big thank you to all of you) and some new recruits as well.

So, let's get creative. There's an awful lot of monofilament on those wrecks off New Jersey, North Carolina and in the Great Lakes. The fish can't get the stuff out, so that means it's probably going to

be divers. Just bring along a pair of cutters on your dive Saturday, September 20 and "presto" you have a cleanup going! Before the event begins, we will send our readers "mini" forms for participating in small cleanups. More on this in a later issue.

So, let's get the lead out, literally, and the cans and plastic and other debris.



Fishing line and other refuse were pulled from the lakes, oceans and rivers of the world last September, during the 1996 Underwater Cleanup. Trash Captains are urgently needed for this year's cleanup on September 20.

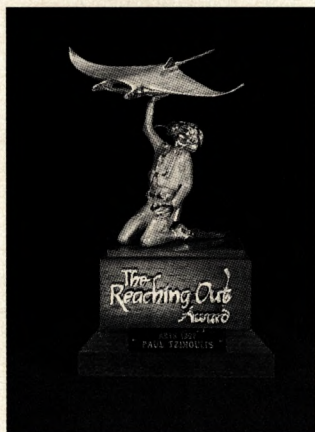
This event depends solely on your participation. Businesses that sponsor local cleanups do tend to get benefits from local radio, TV and newspaper publicity. For the diving community at large, it's a great way to show your concern for the environment and let people know you're doing something about it!

Please register today as a Trash Captain. For more information, contact the CMC at (800) CMC-BEACH or (804) 851-4183; volunteer Dive Centers may register with PADI at (800) 729-7234, ext. 328 (U.S.), (714) 540-7234, ext. 328 or with the CMC. 

PAUL TZIMOULIS RECEIVES AWARD

(Continued from Page 125)

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PREPARING FOR THE BIG ONE

(Continued from Page 156)

straps or worse. Expect things to break at the most inopportune moments.

DO NOT USE NEW EQUIPMENT: New fins and a new mask or snorkel are one thing but a new BC or computer is another. New dive gear is a blend of complexity and style. Do you really need 16 D-rings on your BC? Probably not but to many it looks high tech and cool. Computers are getting smaller and more complex every year but it takes time to understand and digest the huge volume of information. No matter how simplistic an instrument seems, read the owner's manual.

RESEARCH YOUR DIVING ENVIRONMENT: I have seen people visiting the Caribbean emerge from their cabins wearing drysuits and others attempting to wear 3mm suits in Puget Sound. Conditions not only change from ocean to ocean but from season to season as well. Research water temperature, anticipated currents and even aquatic life. The Lingcod of Puget Sound are docile in summer but rather testy in winter while they protect their eggs. Small fins may work great in your local quarry but not in the heavy surge off Hawaii's Kona Coast. Local dive shops will be happy to sell you new ones but you can bet there will be a healthy markup.

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS: I witnessed a sad event not long ago during a cruise off Bonaire. A large family arrived for a wonderful Christmas in the tropics; all professed to be divers. Two of the family members forgot their C-cards and could not dive. In an attempt to help them out of this situation I had them enroll in a Discover Scuba Diving class I was teaching. These "certified" divers panicked during mask clearing skills and had to be helped out of the five foot deep pool. Although mask clearing or regulator recovery skills are not regularly required during a dive, knowing the skills and being able to effectively perform them are. Take a scuba tune up class before you leave home, it's well worth the time and effort.

KNOW YOUR DIVE OPERATOR: Most reputable dive operations know the rules—they make the deepest dive first, know the importance of a surface interval, etc. and have professional staff. Not surprisingly, dive operations are springing up everywhere and not all have instructors or dive-masters on staff. Not long ago I witnessed a small group of divers heading out to sea in a native long boat and found out later the dive guide was not even certified! They returned safely but were less than impressed with their experience. Research your operator and do not be afraid to ask questions about the staff, boats and safety records. 

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BAYMAN BAY CLUB

(Continued from Page 83)

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Take a peek at our FLORIDA KEYS DIVE TRAVEL GUIDE!

Freediver Experiences Shallow Water Blackout

BY STEPHEN PACETTI

After scuba diving for nearly 18 years, I began freediving, hoping for a new challenge. As a teenager I had been a competitive swimmer and found I still had some of my earlier stamina. There was also spiritual appeal to freediving—it was like underwater meditation.

During Labor Day weekend I planned to spend three days on a live-aboard off San Clemente Island, California. As usual, I didn't sleep well the first night on the boat. Despite feeling tired and not particularly energetic, I ate a little and decided to go freediving.

My buddies were getting ready to make their first dive so I entered the water with them. This was my second mistake. Even though I was diving near others, I was essentially diving alone. Scuba divers cannot look out for a freediver.

I took a few deep breaths and piked down. At the outer edge of the kelp bed I grabbed my buddy Dave's console: it read 67 feet. At this point they started heading back toward the boat.

Then I made my third mistake. I usually have no distractions when I freedive. Between dives I rest on the surface and don't move at all. While on the bottom I just observe, swim very little and pay attention to how I feel. Here, I was swimming on the surface through thick kelp. Once on the bottom, I would catch up with my buddies and swim with them. On the fourth or fifth dive I finned down about 50 feet and swam alongside Rich, the leader of the group. This was my fourth and final mistake. I was showing off and trying to impress my buddies. Tiring, I grabbed Rich's first stage to hitch a ride. After a while I let go and headed up.

I saw a large clearing in the kelp canopy and rose toward it. The surface was very calm; the sun, still low in the sky, highlighted the movement of the water. It moved slowly, a liquid mirror. I'll

never forget the way it looked.

The next thing I remember I was lying flat on my back on the deck of the boat. People were holding my arms and legs down. I was fighting to get them off. I lurched, trying to sit up but was pushed down. Confusion, panic and anger at being held down welled up inside me. My vision was blurred, just shadows. An oxygen mask was pressed onto my face. I wanted to speak but everything was slurred and uncoordinated. My mouth and

lungs get smaller. Consequently, the partial pressure of oxygen in your lungs is raised. Hemoglobin in the blood is oxygenated according to the oxygen partial pressure. During freediving you can use this to extend your bottom time. Even though the percent of oxygen in your lungs is low, the depth makes the partial pressure high. However, you pay a price for this. On the way up, the pressure drops. The oxygen level drops quickly and you black out. On the last dive I don't remember really hurting for air. As I rose, things just moved slower and slower.

Apparently, on the surface, even though I was not breathing my heart kept beating. It is a good thing I was weighted lightly.

After I had been breathing oxygen for more than half an hour, the U.S. Coast Guard arrived and my panic lessened. I simply felt embarrassed.

After evacuation by helicopter, I spent a day and night in intensive care, followed by another day and night in a regular hospital room. Monday morning, reasonably sure that there were no permanent effects, I walked out of the hospital and flew home to San Jose, California.

I learned many things from this experience. I learned that I had been too care-free in the water for some time. On many occasions I had gone freediving alone. I was very lucky, my story could have been very different, with a very different ending. To this day, I am still astonished it happened. I plan on sticking to scuba diving as I'm not sure I can trust myself freediving. In all my years of scuba diving, I have never had a problem.

If you are drawn to freediving, do it with a buddy or at least have someone watch your ascents. Don't do it when you are tired and don't hyperventilate on the surface as I suspect I was doing. Know what your limits are or someday your limits will find you. 

I LEARNED

Mistake One: Freediving while tired.

Mistake Two: Freediving alone.

Mistake Three: Distracted by buddies, with no rest between dives.

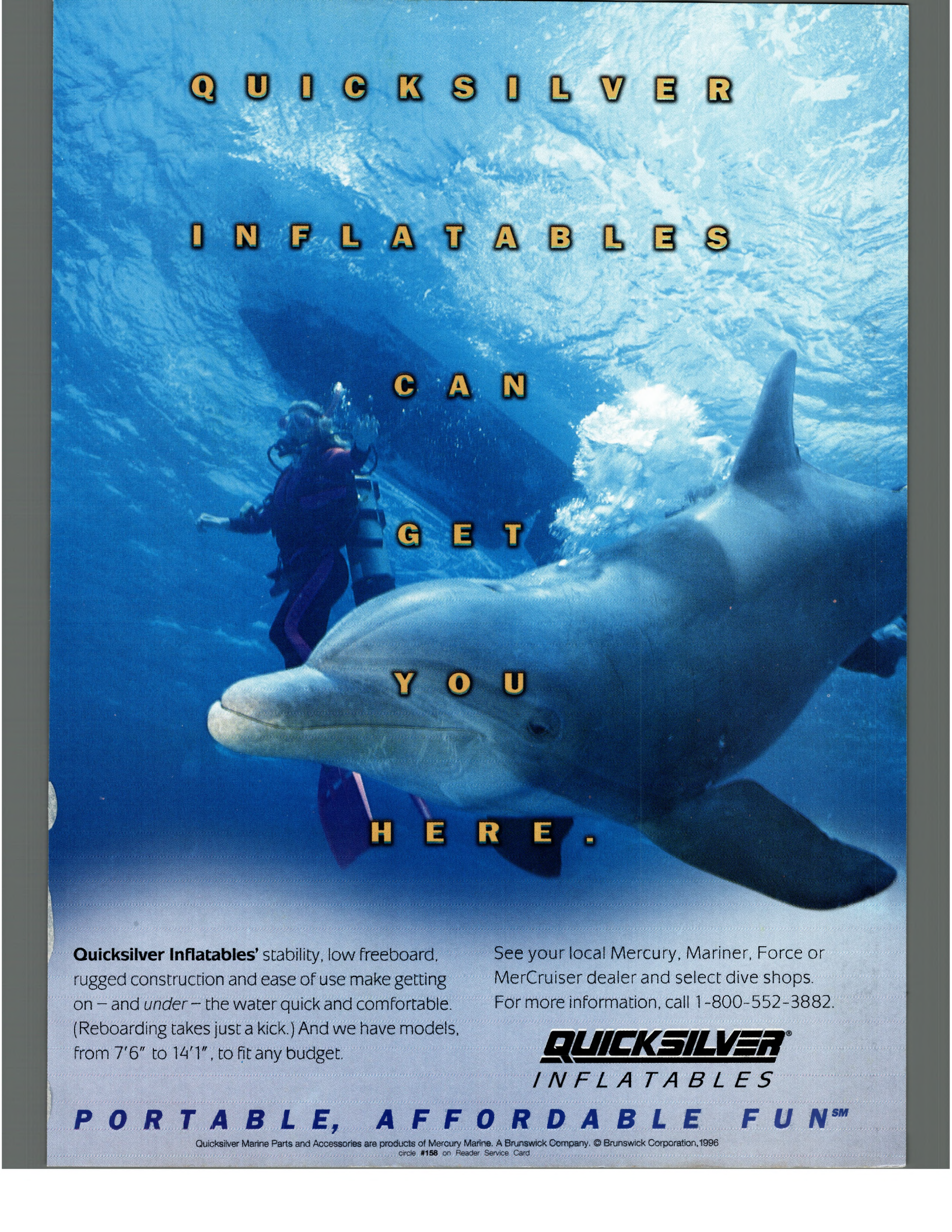
Mistake Four: Showing off.

tongue hurt and my tongue had swollen to fill the back of my mouth. However, I could hear Rich saying, "Take it easy man" over and over. My head pounded and I was very nauseous. I could sense the anxiety in the people around me. I wanted desperately to tell them I would be okay, to give me time, to leave me alone but I couldn't.

I had experienced shallow water blackout. To keep up with my buddies I was hyperventilating on the surface. This artificially lowers the carbon dioxide level in the body and it is the carbon dioxide that gives you the urge to breathe. I was also not resting fully between dives. Another interesting phenomenon is the effect of pressure. As you descend the air in your lungs compresses and your

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A full-page background image showing a scuba diver in a blue wetsuit and mask swimming underwater. A large dolphin is swimming towards the viewer in the foreground, its head and dorsal fin clearly visible. The water is clear blue with some light rays filtering through.

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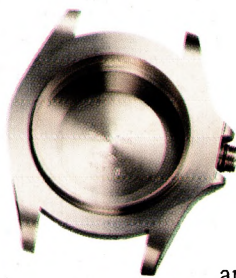
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impenetrable miniature vault which, for this Submariner, is pressure-proof to 1,000 feet. Its legendary durability has made it the standard of excellence among divers, and is just one reason why this timepiece grows even more impressive the deeper you delve into it.



Rolex Oyster Perpetual Submariner Date in 18kt gold and stainless steel with matching Oyster Fliplock bracelet. For the name and location of an Official Rolex Jeweler near you, please call 1-800-36ROLEX. Rolex, , Oyster Perpetual, Submariner, Oyster, Fliplock and Triplock are trademarks.

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